



Teaching Notes

Don't Worry, **FELIX**



SYNOPSIS

Felix has a problem. It's a big, red, round problem. A worry balloon that follows him everywhere he goes ... As his heart thumps, stomach twists and toes wiggle, it grows and grows and stops him from doing what he wants to do. But when Felix learns a special trick, things start to change ...

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Yohann Devezy is an author who seeks to create beautiful books with messages of hope, strength and acceptance. He is driven by a desire to write stories that can be shared across generations, underpinned by the embracing of inclusivity and diversity. He is passionate about mental health, LGBTIQ+ inclusion and broader social justice issues. *Hugo, the Boy with the Curious Mark* was his first published children's book. Born in France, Yohann now lives in Perth, Australia, where he works as a counsellor and writes stories that can 'make a difference,' he says.

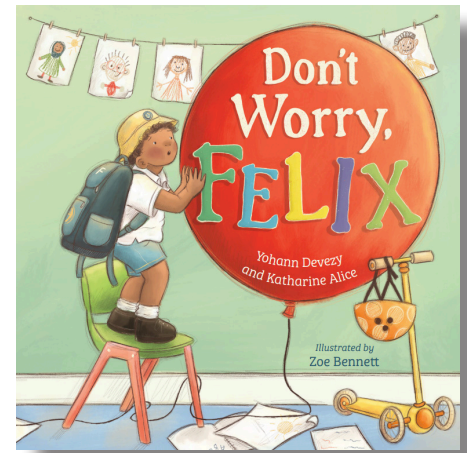
Katharine Alice is a debut author and seeks to create captivating books that empower children to understand and regulate their big emotions. She is passionate about providing parents with strategies to support their child's emotional development. As an occupational therapist, she has worked primarily with children within an early intervention setting. Katharine was born and raised in Fremantle, Western Australia. *Don't Worry, Felix* is her first joint picture book.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Zoe Bennett is a children's illustrator from Sydney, New South Wales. She creates digital illustrations which aim to capture the playful candidness of childhood and human-animal companionship. Designing unique characters and worlds with tailored colour palettes and style is her favourite thing to do. Zoe has illustrated several published and soon-to-be published picture books for clients both in Australia and internationally. Outside illustration, Zoe is passionate about animal welfare, conservation, reading, music and travel. Zoe's first book with New Frontier Publishing, *Ruby's Repair Cafe*, was selected as a Notable by the CBCA this year.

HOW THE BOOK ENHANCES LEARNING

Don't Worry, Felix follows a little boy, Felix, on his first few days at a new school. For many, a new school can be a very anxious time. This book normalises children's experiences of anxiety and empowers children to identify and decrease systems of stress and worry and face their fears. One author is a qualified counsellor, and the other, an occupational therapist, and they have weaved into the story a 'special trick' that the father teaches Felix. This 'Take 5 breathing technique' is a simple strategy that can empower children to calm their nervous system through the power of their own breath. The technique can be adjusted to suit each child's current abilities. Celebrating self-empowerment and the importance of helping others, this is a great teaching resource for parents and teachers.



Written and illustrated by
Yohann Devezy & Katharine Alice

Published by
New Frontier Publishing

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DISCUSSION TOPICS

Read the book together, asking questions throughout.

1. Look at the cover of the book together. What do you think the story might be about?
2. How did you feel on your first day at school? Excited, nervous, worried, happy ...? Talk about how people can feel differently about the same situation.
3. Describe how you think Felix is feeling.
4. What do you think the red balloon represents?
5. Have you ever felt your heart thumping, stomach twisting and toes wiggling? In what situation(s)?
6. Why does the balloon get bigger?
7. What does Felix's dad teach him? Can you try this special trick? How does it make you feel?
8. Why does Felix feel anxious again the next day?
9. What happens when Felix practises the trick on his own?
10. Talk about what happens on the last spread?
11. What do you think about the end of the story? What sort of message is being given?
12. What did the children think of the book? If they liked it, why did they like it? What was their favourite part?



Alternative breathing techniques:

- Stretch your hand out like a star. With your other hand's pointer finger tap the tips of your five fingers as you take a big breath in through your nose. Once you have tapped every finger then tap your fingers back the other way as you breathe out through your mouth. Repeat three times.
- Breathe in through your nose while slowly stretching your hand out, like a star, to the count of five. Breathe out through your mouth while you slowly make your hand into a tight fist to the count of five. Repeat three times.
- Breathe in through your nose to the count of four. Hold your breath for the count of two. Breathe out through your mouth. Repeat three times.

WORDSEARCH ACTIVITY

Can you find all the words in the *Don't Worry, Felix* wordsearch.

Name:

Class:

Date:

word search

DON'T WORRY, FELIX



E S C H O O L I E
N O O L L A B S R
M X I L E F D S E
L C N D U N T A N
A N X I E T Y L O
C L D I T R I C K
W O R R Y A A O N
H F A M I L Y C N
G U H A P P Y A S

ANXIETY
BALLOON
CALM
CLASS
FAMILY

FELIX
FRIENDS
HAPPY
HUG
RED

SCARED
SCHOOL
SOLUTION
TRICK
WORRY



Answer Sheet

word search

DON'T WORRY, FELIX



E S C H O O L I E
N O O L L A B S R
M X I L E F D S E
L C N D U N T A N
A N X I E T Y L O
C L D I T R I C K
W O R R Y A A O N
H F A M I L Y C N
G U H A P P Y A S



ANXIETY
BALLOON
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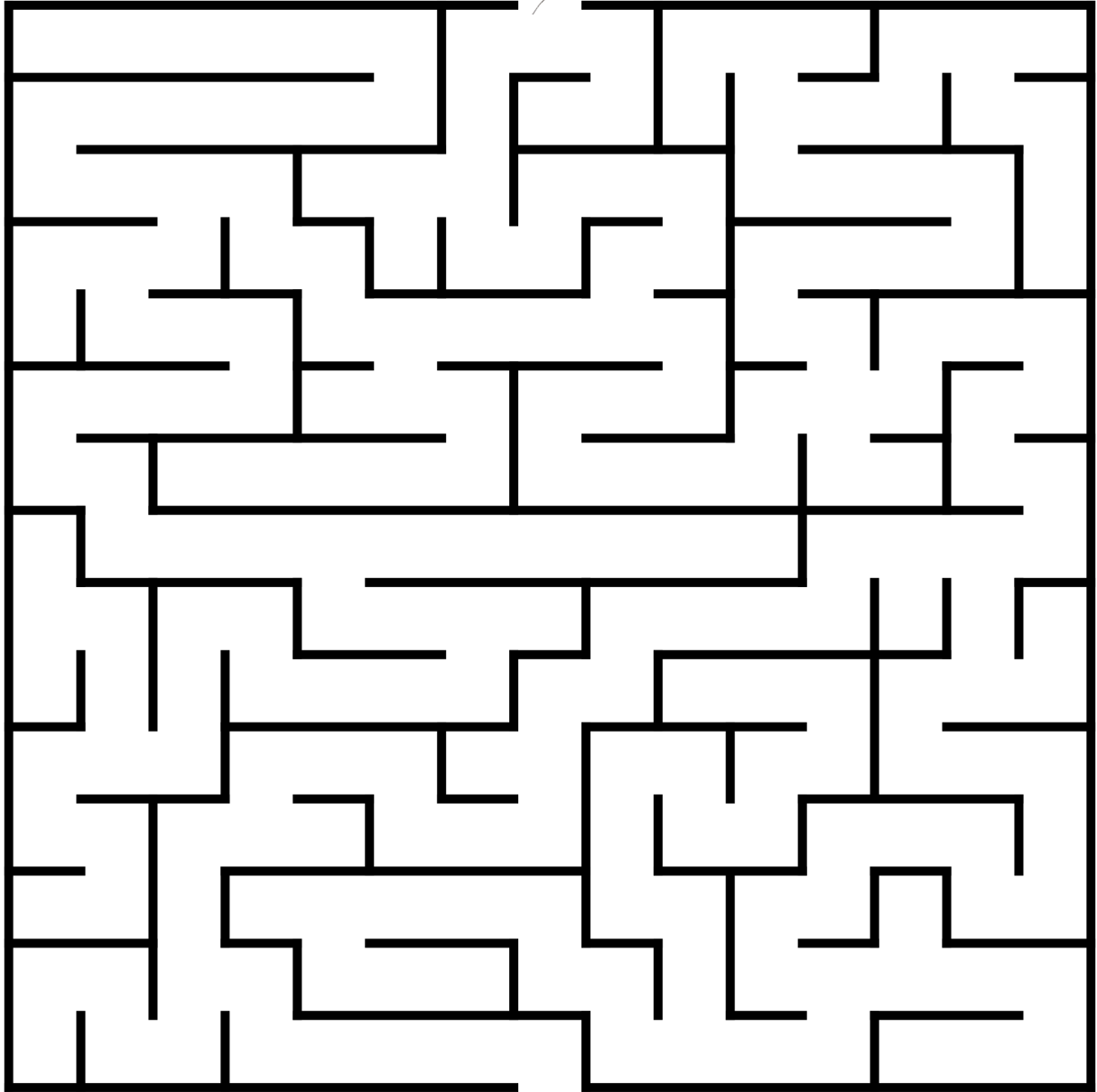
FELIX
FRIENDS
HAPPY
HUG
RED

SCARED
SCHOOL
SOLUTION
TRICK
WORRY

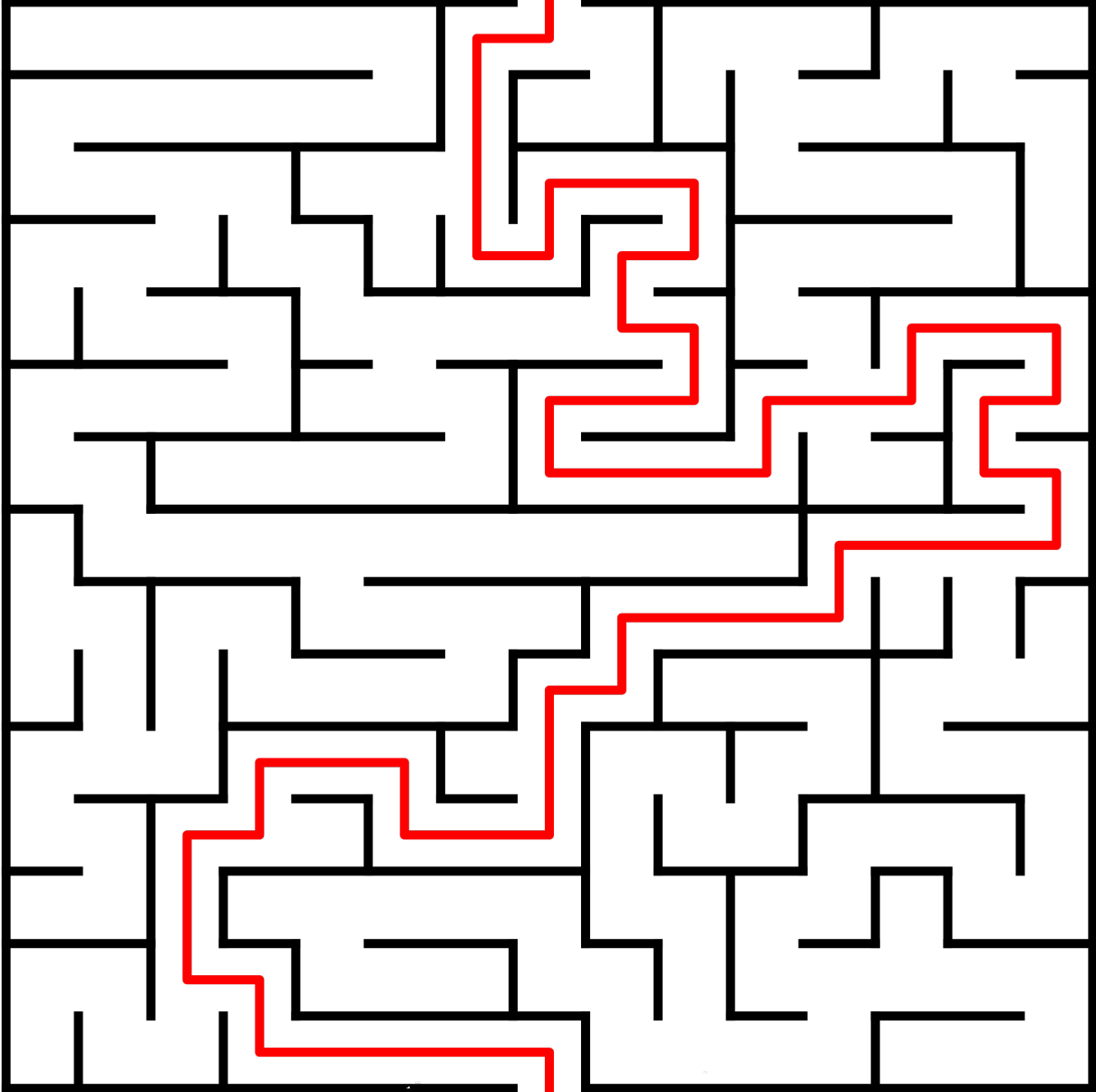


A-MAZE-ING FELIX

Can you help Felix walk away from his red balloon?



SOLUTION TO A-MAZE-ING FELIX



How does my body feel when I am nervous?

Use the image below to draw or label how your body reacts when you are feeling nervous. You can use to the list below to help you.

Head

- Headache
- Dizzy
- Sweaty
- Ringing in ears
- Watering eyes
- Hot cheeks
- Dry mouth
- Grinding teeth

Arms & Hands

- Shaking arms
- Sweaty palms
- Fidgeting fingers
- Numb or tingling fingers

Torso

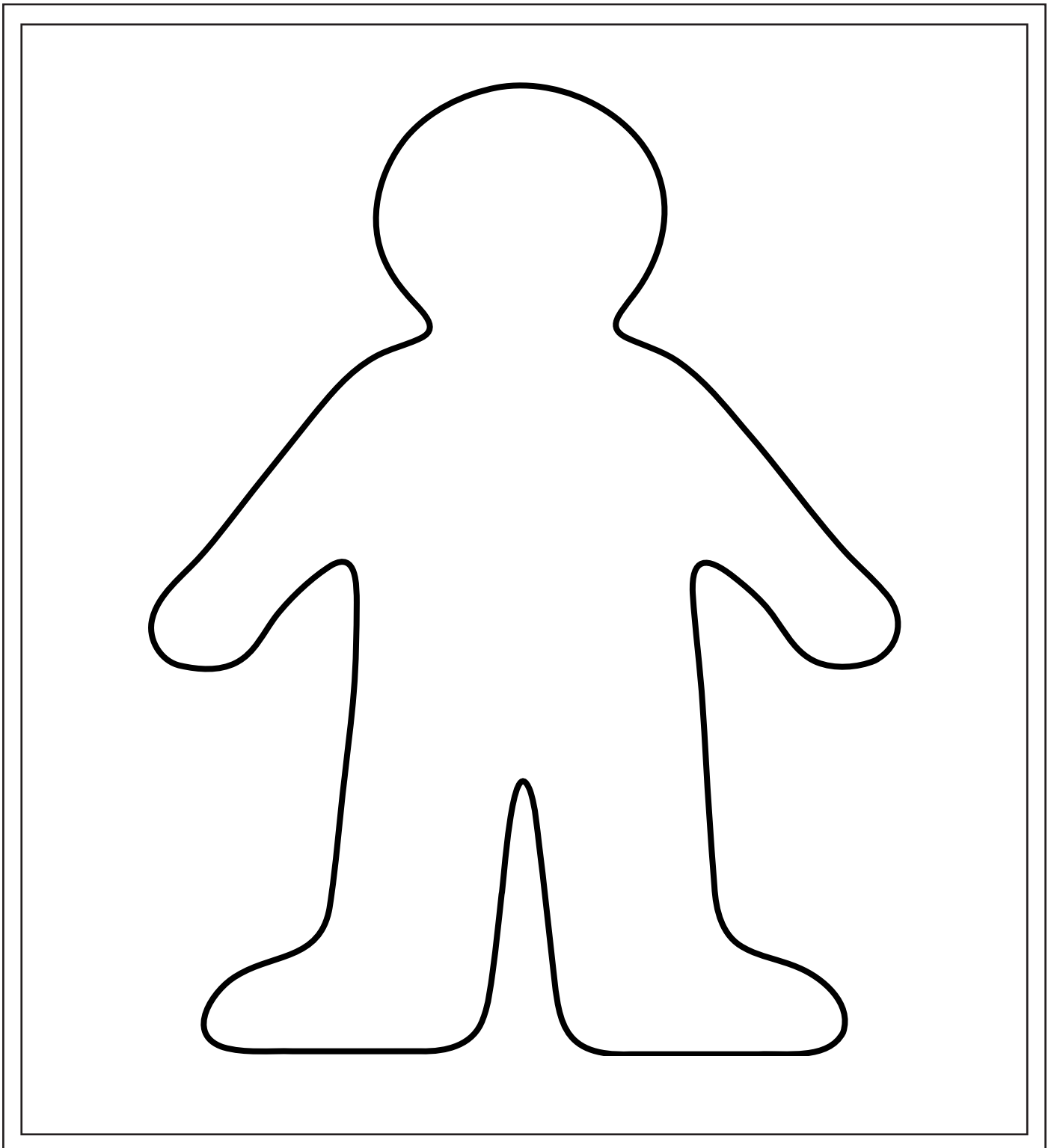
- Thumping heart
- Chest pain
- Fast breathing
- Stomach twisting or churning

Legs & Feet

- Shaking legs
- Tense legs
- Toes wriggling

Neck & Shoulders

- Tight throat
- Burning neck
- Tense shoulders



Alternate Activities

- Can you find a picture of Felix looking nervous in the book? How can you tell he is feeling nervous?
 - What do our faces look like when we are feeling nervous? Can you show me your nervous face? Discuss what makes each of you feel nervous.
 - Talk about what you might be thinking when your body is feeling nervous. Add a thought bubble to the picture above including some of these thoughts.
-

My Calming Backpack

Think about some different strategies or tools that may help you when you are feeling nervous. Add these to the backpack on the next page to create your own calming backpack. You can use the words below to help you or come up with your own ideas! Remember to practise these strategies over time to find out which ones work best for you.

Breathing activity

Listen to music

Go somewhere quiet

Go somewhere dark

Hug from a parent/friend/pet

Talk to someone about how you feel

Squeeze a stress ball/sensory toy

Fidget spinner

Headphones

Ride a bike

Dance

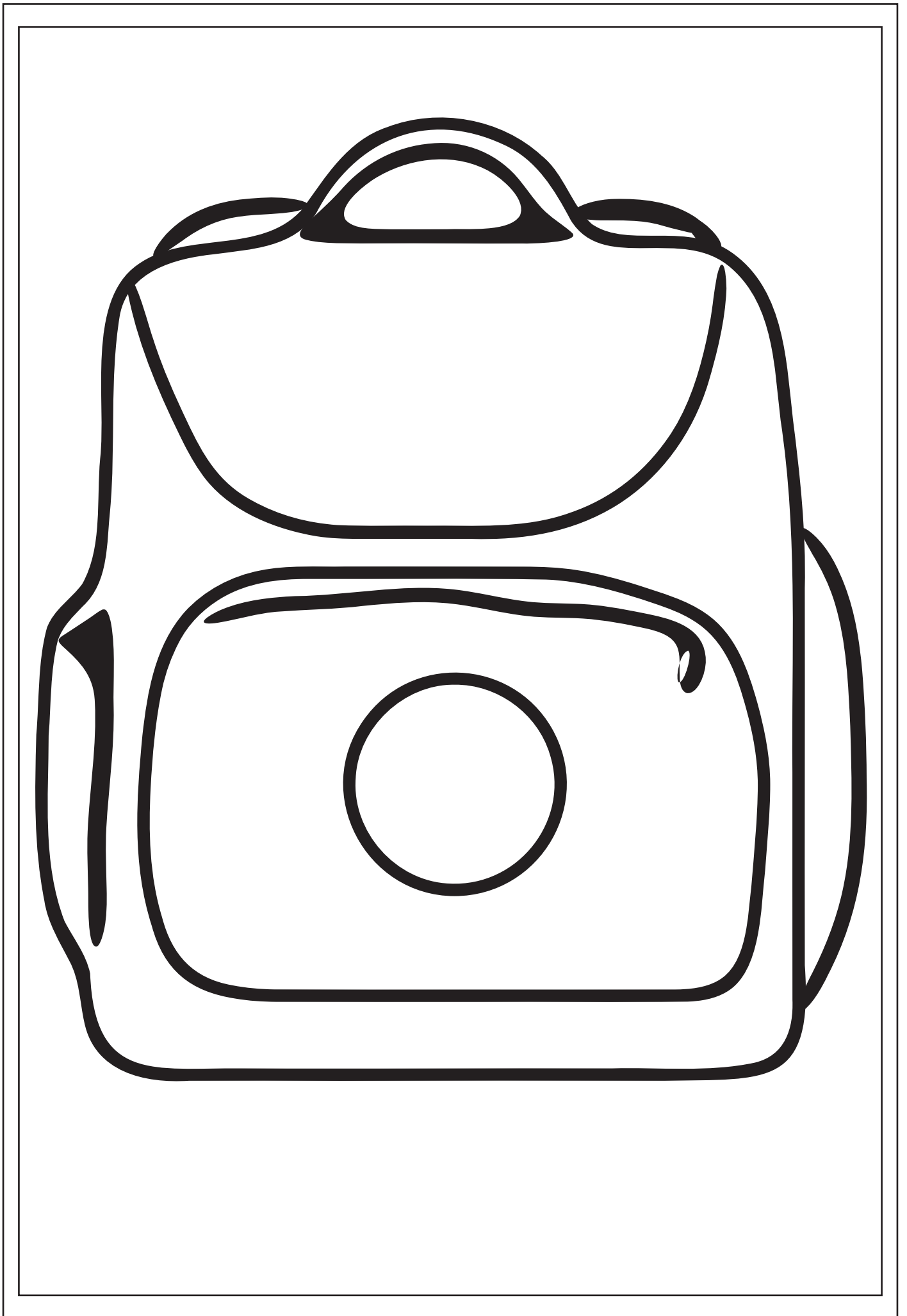
Kick a ball

Bounce on trampoline

Read a book

Draw or paint

Drink some water



ACTIVITIES

For Teachers:

Learning Objectives: Outline the key takeaways for students, such as understanding anxiety, identifying and expressing worries, recognising physical, emotional, mental and behavioural symptoms, and practising effective breathing techniques.

1. **Balloon Breathing:** Have students imagine their stomachs as balloons. Instruct them to slowly inflate the balloon by inhaling deeply through the nose and then deflate it by exhaling slowly through the mouth.
2. **Feather Breathing:** Give each student a feather. Have them practise breathing gently to make the feather float in the air, focusing on slow and controlled breaths.

Mindfulness Exercises:

1. **Mindful Colouring:** Provide colouring sheets with scenes from the book. Encourage children to focus on their breathing and stay present while they colour.
2. **Body Scan:** Guide students through a body scan meditation, helping them notice and relax each part of their body from head to toe.
3. **Use 'Worry Bubbles':** Children can blow bubbles using a bubble wand, imagining their worries floating away with each bubble they blow.

This activity combines creativity, physical action, and a symbolic gesture to help children manage their anxieties, making the process both therapeutic and fun.

Role-Playing:

1. **Anxiety Scenarios:** Create scenarios where students might feel anxious (e.g. taking a test, meeting new people). Role-play these situations and practise the breathing techniques from the book or teaching notes to manage anxiety.
2. **Breathing Buddies:** Pair students up and have them practise teaching each other the breathing techniques. This reinforces their understanding and builds confidence.

Creative Activities:

1. **Breathing Journal:** Have students create a journal where they can draw or write about how they feel before and after practising breathing techniques.
2. **Story Writing:** Ask students to write their own short stories or draw comics about a character who uses breathing techniques to overcome anxiety.

Group Discussions

1. **Feelings Chart:** Create a chart with different emotions. Have students place stickers or draw faces to show how they feel before and after breathing exercises.
2. **Classroom Agreement:** Develop a classroom agreement on how to support each other when someone feels anxious. Include a section on using the breathing techniques from the book.



Games:

1. **Breath Relay:** Set up a relay race where students must complete a breathing exercise at each station before moving to the next.
2. **Calm Down Jars:** Have students create calm down jars with water, glitter and small objects. They can shake the jar and practise breathing until the glitter settles.

Other:

Balloon Breathing with Bubbles:

1. **Materials:** Small bottles of bubble solution with wands.
2. **Instructions:**
 - o Have students sit or stand comfortably.
 - o Instruct them to take a deep breath in through their nose, imagining their stomachs inflating like a balloon.
 - o Have them hold the breath for a moment.
 - o Then, have them exhale slowly and gently through their mouth while blowing bubbles.
3. **Discussion:**
 - o Explain to the students that just like the bubbles they blow, their worries can float away and pop, disappearing into the air.
 - o Encourage students to visualise their worries going away with each bubble they blow.
4. **Reflection:**
 - o After the activity, have a discussion about how they felt before, during, and after blowing bubbles.
 - o Ask them to describe any changes in their feelings or thoughts.

This addition to the Balloon Breathing activity provides a tangible way for children to connect their breathing practice with letting go of their worries, making the exercise more effective and enjoyable.



That night in bed, Felix could not stop thinking about school and that balloon!

Activity: Worry Balloon Release

Objective:

To help children identify their worries, express them, and symbolically let go of their anxieties using a balloon template.

Option A:

Materials Needed:

- Printable balloon templates (template provided on next page)
- Crayons, markers, or coloured pencils
- Paper strips (optional)
- Scissors
- String or yarn (optional)
- Tape (optional)

Instructions

1. **Identify the Worries:**
 - o Give each child a few strips of paper (optional) or the balloon template directly.
 - o Ask them to think about things that worry them and write each worry on a separate strip of paper or directly on the balloon template. If they are too young to write, they can draw their worries.
2. **Transfer the Worries to the Template:**
 - o Hand out a balloon template to each child.
 - o Have them write or draw their worries on the template inside the balloon shapes.
3. **Decorate the Balloons:**
 - o Allow the children to colour and decorate their balloon templates with crayons, markers, or coloured pencils. This step helps them engage creatively and makes the activity enjoyable.
4. **Cut Out the Balloons:**
 - o Once the children have finished decorating, help them cut out the balloon shapes along the dotted lines (if applicable).
5. **Symbolic Release:**
 - o If using the string/yarn option, tape a piece of string to each balloon to make it look like a real balloon.
 - o Gather the children and have them hold their balloon templates.
 - o On the count of three, ask them to release their balloons into the air, symbolising letting go of their worries. (If indoors, they can simply hold them up high and imagine the release.)
6. **Discussion and Reflection:**
 - o After the release, gather the children for a discussion.
 - o Talk about how it felt to let go of their worries.
 - o Encourage them to use deep breathing and talking to trusted adults as ongoing strategies for dealing with anxiety.

When his dad came to say good night, he could see that Felix was very worried.

'What's wrong? Is everything okay?' asked Dad.

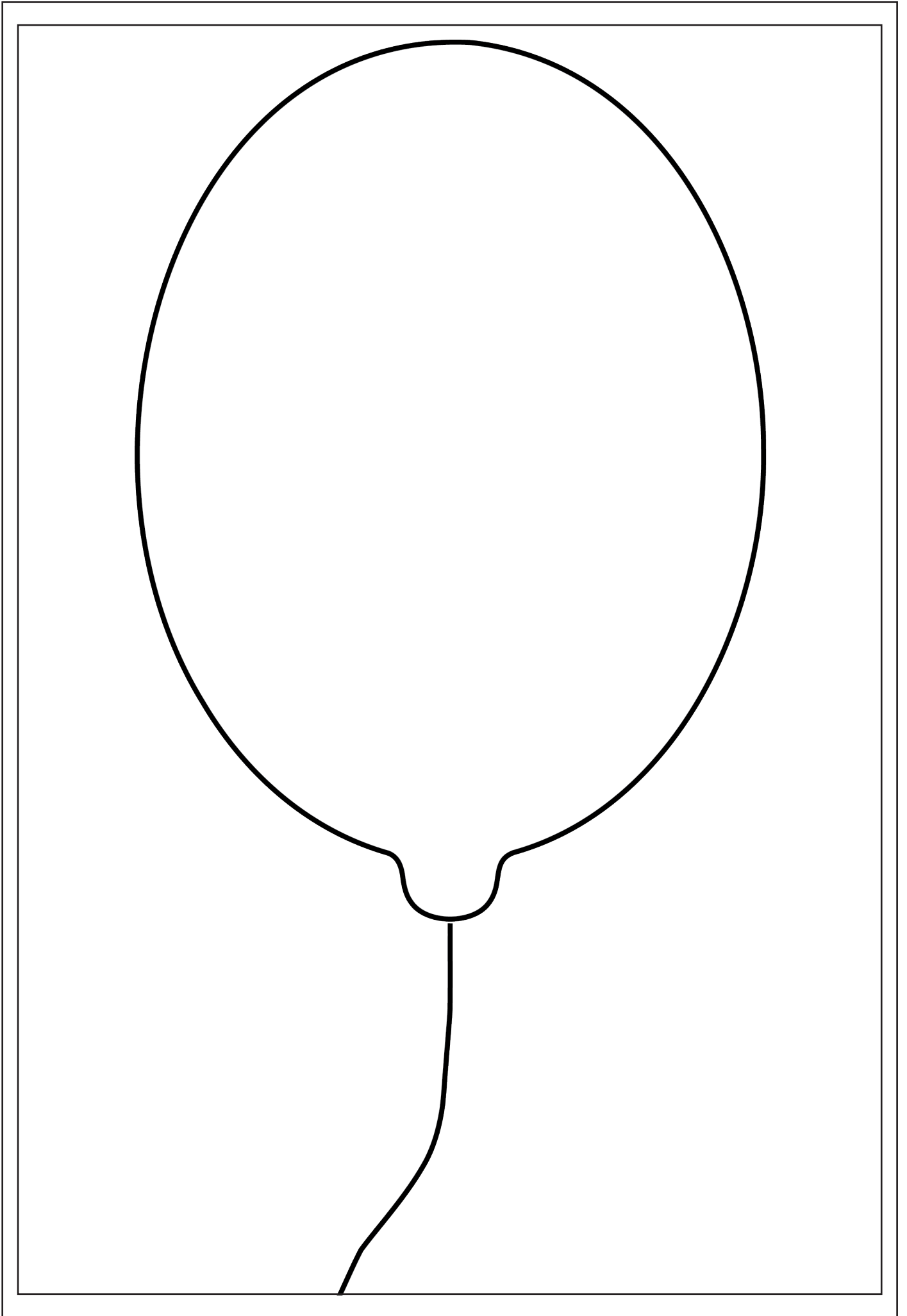
Felix sighed. 'All day long my heart was **thumping**, my stomach was **twisting** and my toes were **wiggling**.'



When I tried to do anything, there was a **BIG** red balloon stopping me in my tracks!



'It's okay to feel nervous,' said Dad. 'Everyone feels nervous sometimes. I do too! Let me tell you my special trick that always helps me feel better.'



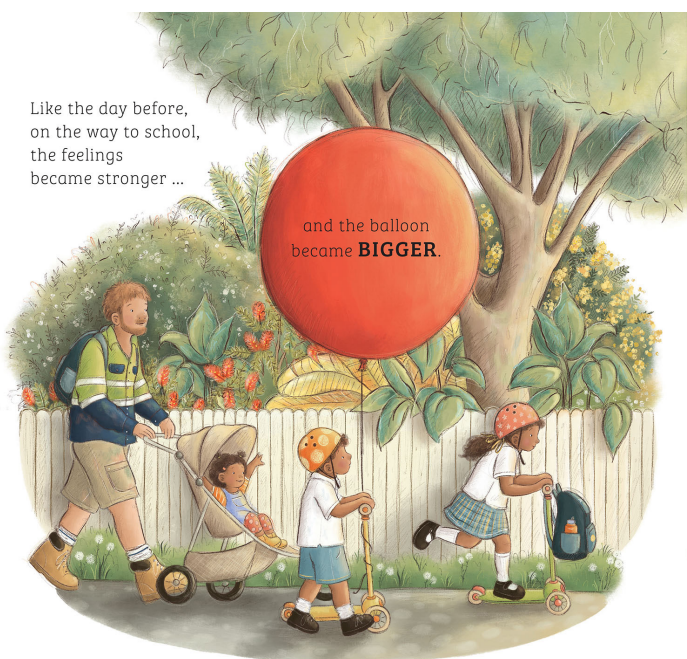
Option B:

Materials Needed:

- Balloons (biodegradable)
- Permanent markers
- Paper strips
- A pen or pencil
- String
- A designated outdoor area (if possible)

Instructions:

1. **Identify the Worries:**
 - o Give each child a few strips of paper.
 - o Ask them to think about things that worry them and write each worry on a separate strip of paper. If they are too young to write, they can draw their worries.
2. **Transfer the Worries:**
 - o Hand out a balloon to each child.
 - o Ask the children to read (or describe) their worries aloud if they feel comfortable.
 - o Using a permanent marker, have them write or draw their worries on the balloon's surface.
3. **Inflate the Balloons:**
 - o Help the children blow up their balloons and tie them off with a string.
 - o Explain that as they blow up the balloon, they are transferring their worries into it.
4. **Symbolic Release:**
 - o Gather the children in a safe outdoor area.
 - o On the count of three, ask them to release their balloons into the air, symbolising letting go of their worries.
 - o Have them tie their balloons to a designated "Worry Tree" or structure (like a fence) where they can be visually released but later collected and disposed of responsibly, symbolising getting rid of their worries.
5. **Discussion and Reflection:**
 - o After the release, gather the children for a discussion.
 - o Talk about how it felt to let go of their worries.
 - o Encourage them to use deep breathing and talking to trusted adults as ongoing strategies for dealing with anxiety.



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