

# Parenting Guide on Toddlers

by  
Singapore Children's Society

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## About this Parenting Guide

Just when you are beginning to understand your baby's needs and wants, your "baby" is taking his/ her first steps and is speaking in complete sentences.

Congratulations. You have graduated to the world of parenting for toddlers (aged one to three). At this stage, you may realize that parenting is getting complicated. There are frustrating instances when you do not understand why your child behaves in a certain manner and you may react strongly to your child's behaviour, or rather, misbehaviour. It is very easy to let anger take control. However, you can choose to guide your child in a different way.

Every child is different and every parent will face a different set of challenges during the child's growing up years. Effective parenting lies in positive interaction with your child. As your child picks up more words and learns to interact with others by modelling adult behaviour, you can shape your child's behaviour through the way you communicate with him/her.

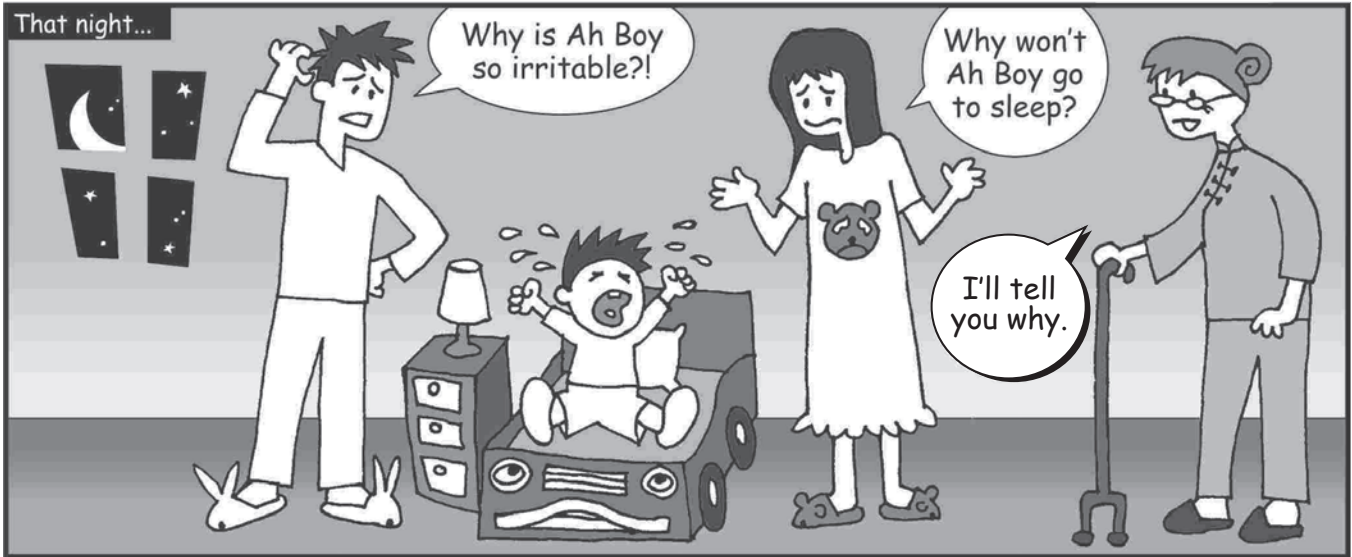
It is impossible for this guide to be all-encompassing. Instead, we use comic illustrations to depict scenarios which might have left you frustrated and unsure of what to do. This light hearted guide provides plausible reasons to explain your child's behaviour. It also offers suggestions on what you can do to handle the situations.

If you wish to discuss any of these parenting issues, do email us at [info@childrensociety.org.sg](mailto:info@childrensociety.org.sg).

Professor Ho Lai Yun  
Chairman, Research and Advocacy Standing Committee (RASC)  
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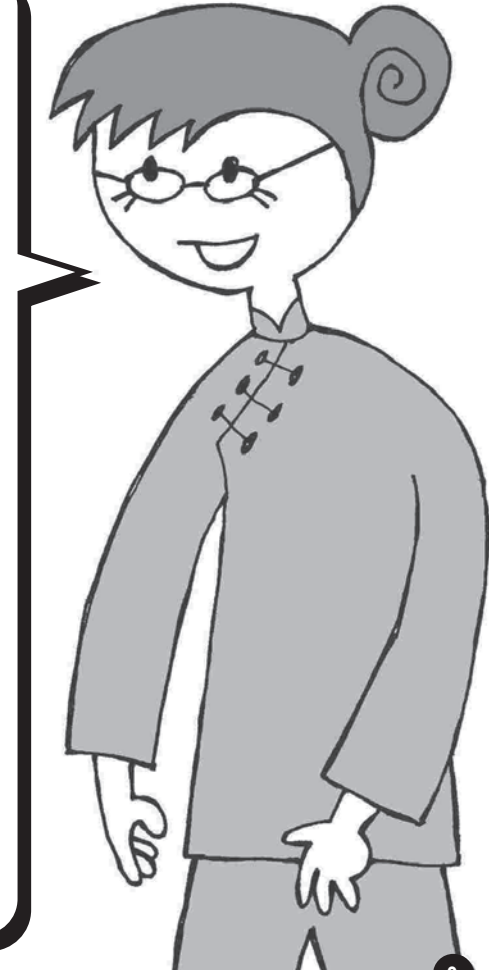
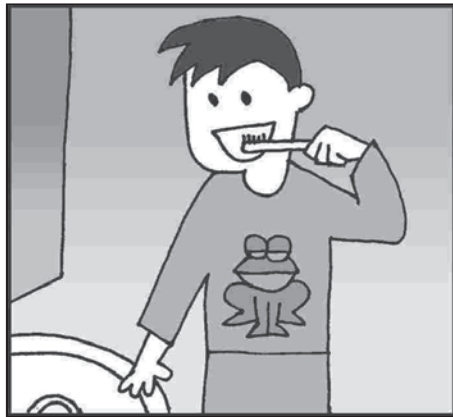
# My Child doesn't Sleep Well



Ah Boy probably played too much in the day. Overexcitement may affect his sleep.

It's good to have a bedtime routine like:

- changing into his pajamas
- brushing his teeth
- reading him a story



Ma, Ah Boy sometimes would cry when we turn off the lights. Is he scared?



Should we have a night light in the room? How about giving him a stuffed toy to hug to sleep?



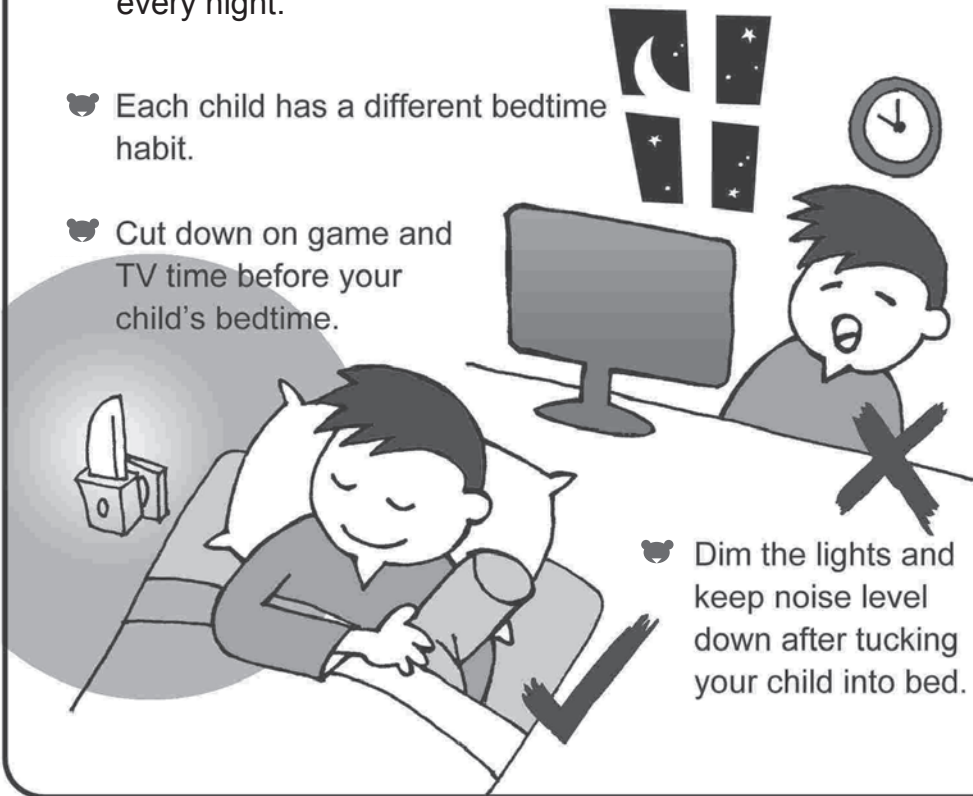
Good idea!

## IN A NUTSHELL

🐻 Toddlers need around 10 to 12 hours of sleep every night.

🐻 Each child has a different bedtime habit.

🐻 Cut down on game and TV time before your child's bedtime.



🐻 Dim the lights and keep noise level down after tucking your child into bed.



# My Child Resists Toilet Training

Neighbour Mrs Ng brings some food over...





I'm sorry Mrs Ng, I didn't hear you. I was trying to get Ah Boy to use the toilet bowl. He just refuses!

Toilet bowl? Isn't Ah Boy too small for it?

Hmm... maybe..

Let me bring you something which will help.

Once, he almost slipped into the toilet bowl.



He's also terrified of the sound of the flush.



Mrs Ng returns...

Look what I've got!

A potty?

Start Ah Boy with this potty when he regularly wakes up dry after naps. It means that he's ready for toilet training.



The potty makes it easier for his bowel movement as well. His feet can touch the floor and that helps him push.

Let Ah Boy take his time. He will be able to use the toilet bowl when he's bigger.

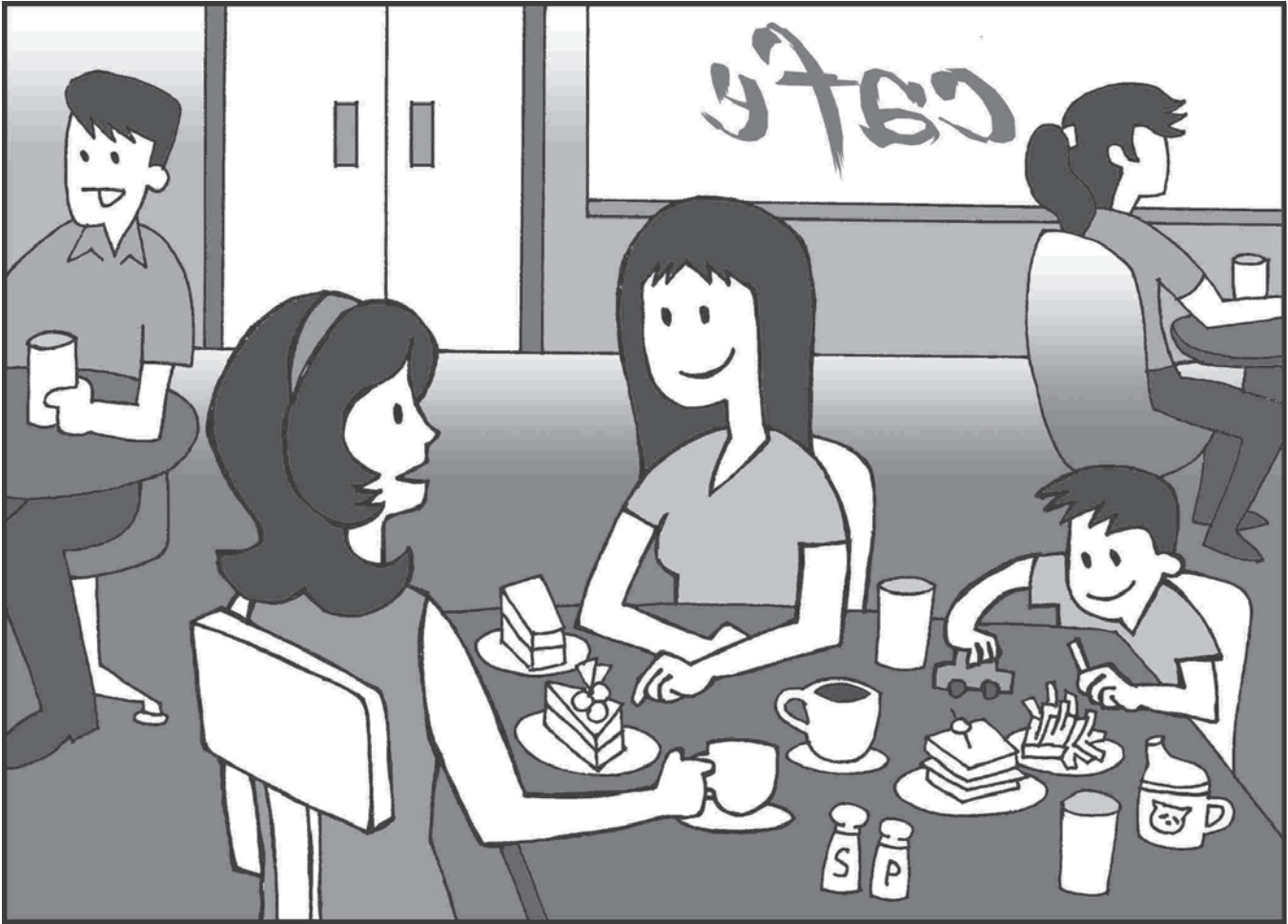


### IN A NUTSHELL

- 🐾 Be patient and encouraging.
- 🐾 Do not scold or punish your child if he has 'accidents'. Show acceptance.
- 🐾 From age one, your child is beginning to be sensitive to adults' comments. What adults say may affect his self-esteem.
- 🐾 Most children begin toilet training between 18 months old and three years old.



# My Child Won't Sit Still



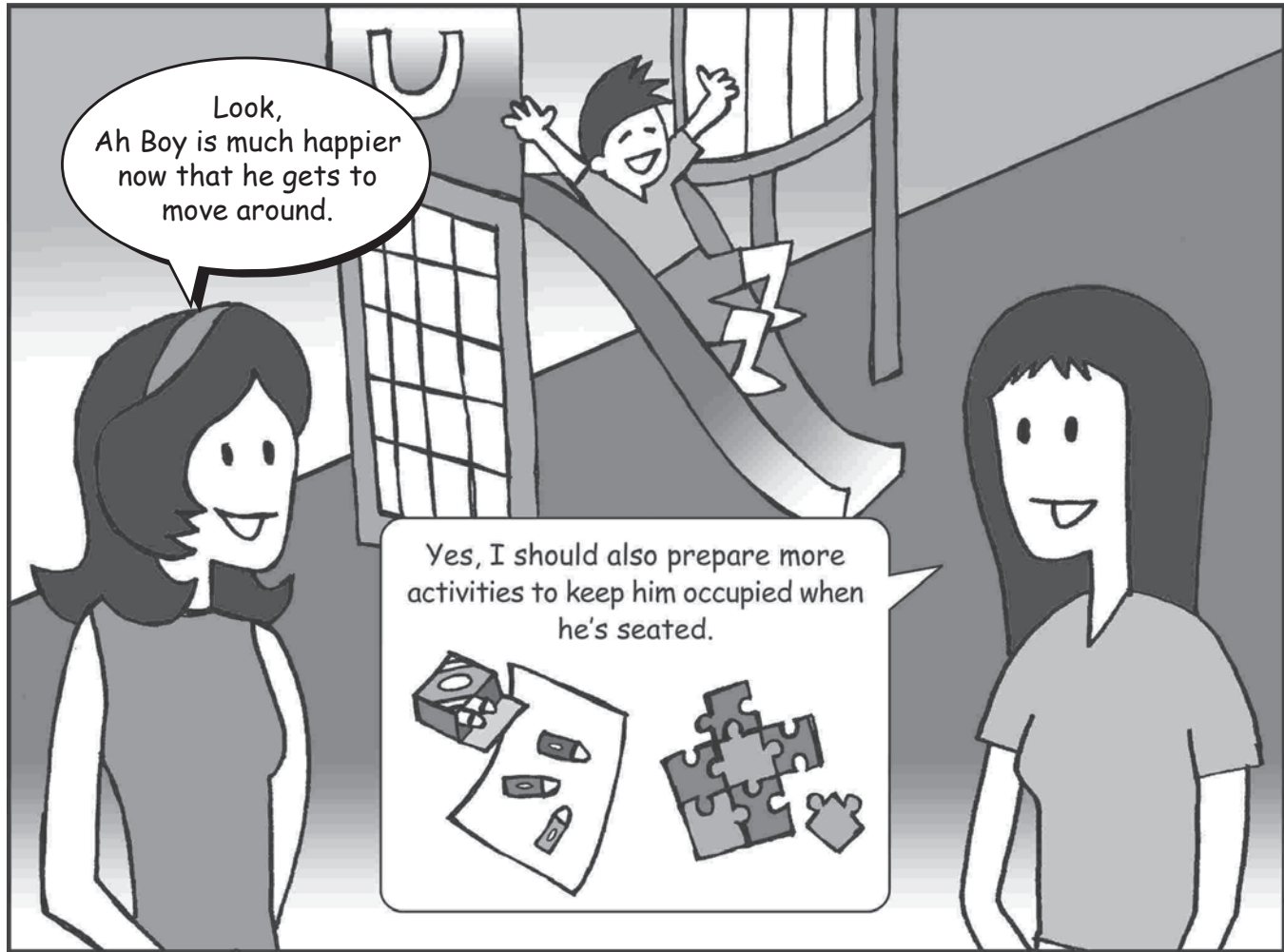
A while later...

Ah Boy! Look what you've done! Sit down now!



Why don't we take him to the playground nearby?





## IN A NUTSHELL

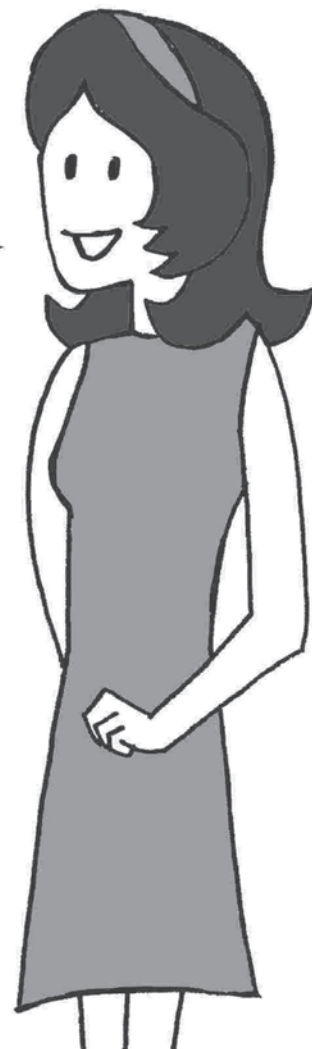
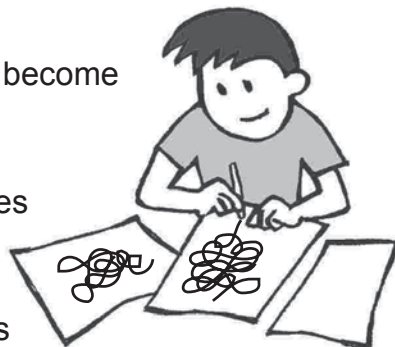
🐾 Toddlers' attention span will become longer as they grow older.

🐾 Break up your child's activities into smaller segments.

🐾 Prepare a variety of activities to engage your child.

🐾 Children cannot sit still for long. It is natural for them to want to explore and play. Playtime is fun and important for their development.

🐾 When your child grows older, he will be able to better restrain himself.



# My Child is Fussy at Mealtimes







Mummy!  
I want  
to eat!

What?!  
Now you  
want to  
eat?

Let Ah Boy join us  
at the dinner table.  
He may like to try the  
dishes prepared.

We just have to cut  
the food into smaller  
pieces for him.



### IN A NUTSHELL



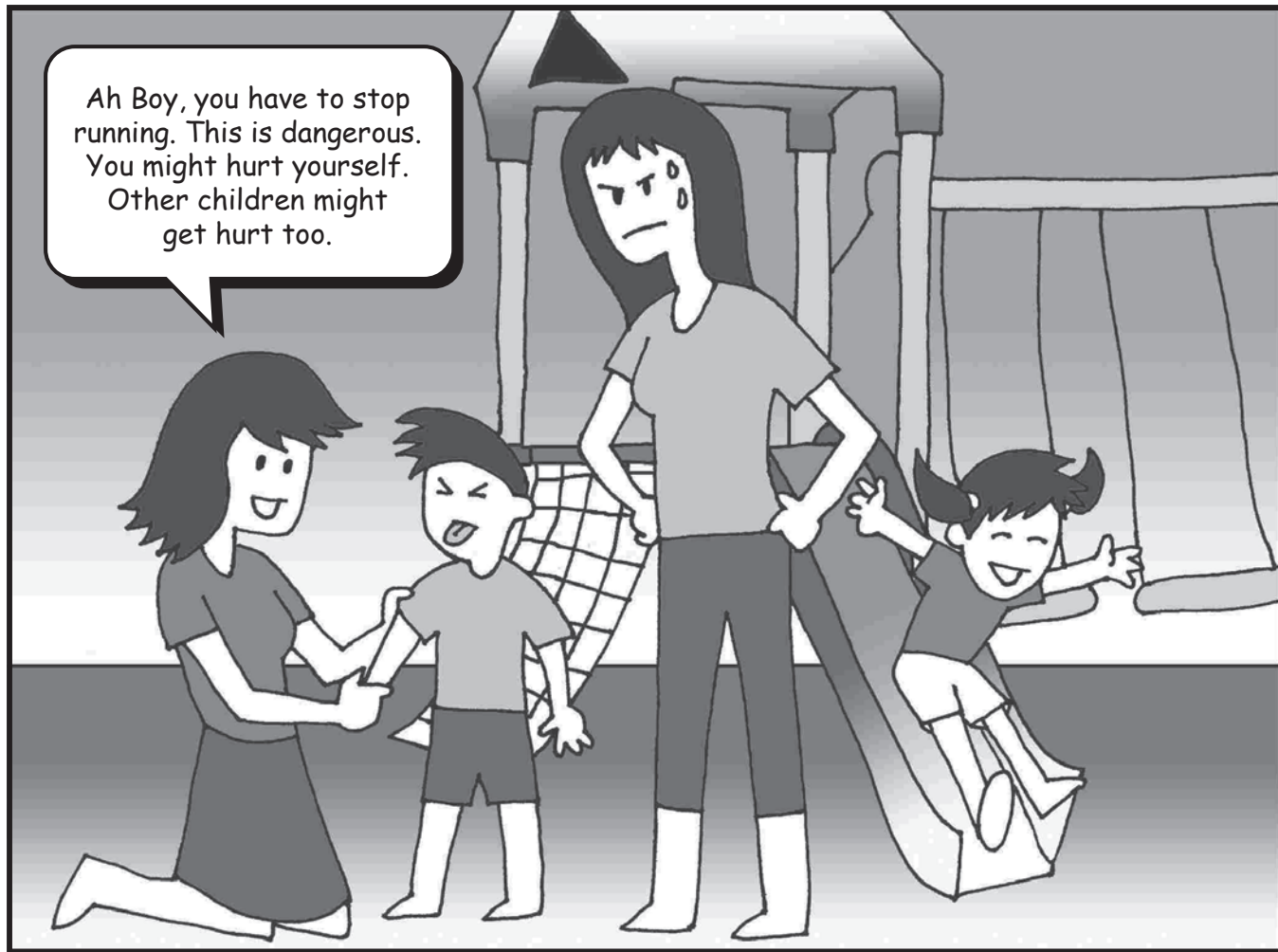
- ♥ Serve a reasonable portion.
- ♥ Use smaller plates, forks and spoons.
- ♥ Discomforts like sore throats or mouth ulcers may make swallowing painful.
- ♥ Let your child eat together with the family. It is normal for toddlers to make a mess as they are still developing their fine motor skills.



# My Child Won't Listen To Me

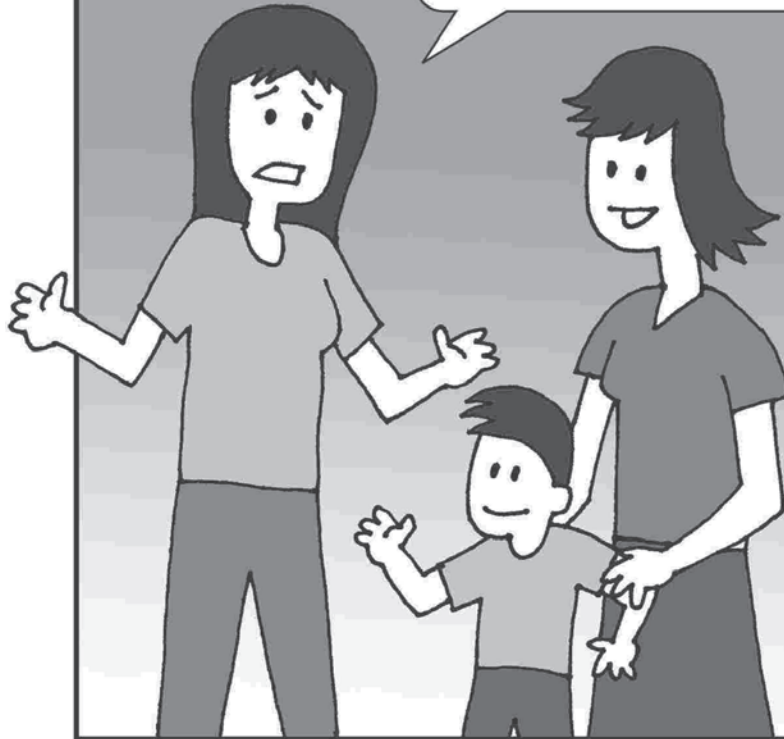


Ah Boy, you have to stop running. This is dangerous. You might hurt yourself. Other children might get hurt too.



How did you get Ah Boy to listen to you?

At home, he'll run around the kitchen and he likes to play with electrical points too.



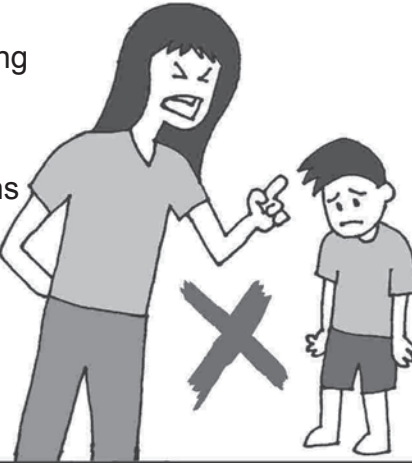
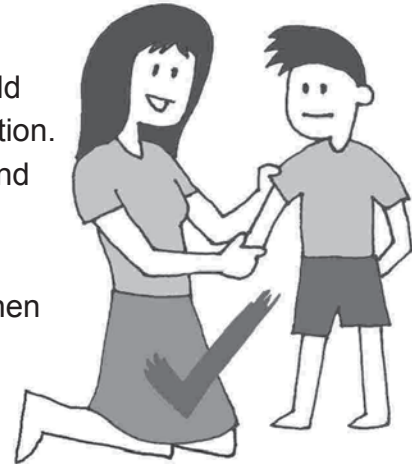
When talking to Ah Boy, keep your instructions simple and clear.



You can child-proof your home. Keep sharp objects in a drawer with a childproof latch. Cover all unused electrical points with safety plugs.

## IN A NUTSHELL

- 🐾 Be firm and explain to your child the reason behind your instruction. Keep your instruction simple and direct.
- 🐾 It helps to keep eye contact when talking to your child.
- 🐾 Your child may forget an instruction. It is more helpful to remind him instead of screaming at or pleading with him.
- 🐾 From age two, your child begins to understand how others feel. Explain to him how his actions would affect others.



# My Child Always Messes Things Up







Ah Boy!  
What have  
you done?!!

You're such  
a naughty  
boy!

Hold it!  
Calm down!

This is Ah Boy's way  
of trying things out.  
Hitting will not help.



## IN A NUTSHELL

- ♥ Try to remain calm when your child misbehaves.
- ♥ Toddlers are constantly exploring their surroundings.
- ♥ Give your child something to draw on. Drawing helps develop his fine motor skills.



- ♥ Get your child to help clean up the mess he made. This would remind him not to do it again.



# My Child Throws Terrible Temper Tantrums







## IN A NUTSHELL



- ☹️ When your child throws a temper tantrum, check if it is caused by physical discomforts.
- ☹️ Remain calm and stay in control. Scolding and shouting at your child will not help.
- ☹️ In a public place, take your child away from the scene. He will continue his temper tantrum if he notices that he is attracting attention.

- ☹️ If the temper tantrum gets violent, hold onto your child to prevent him from hurting himself.
- ☹️ Manage your child's expectation. Let him know when he is allowed to have a new toy.

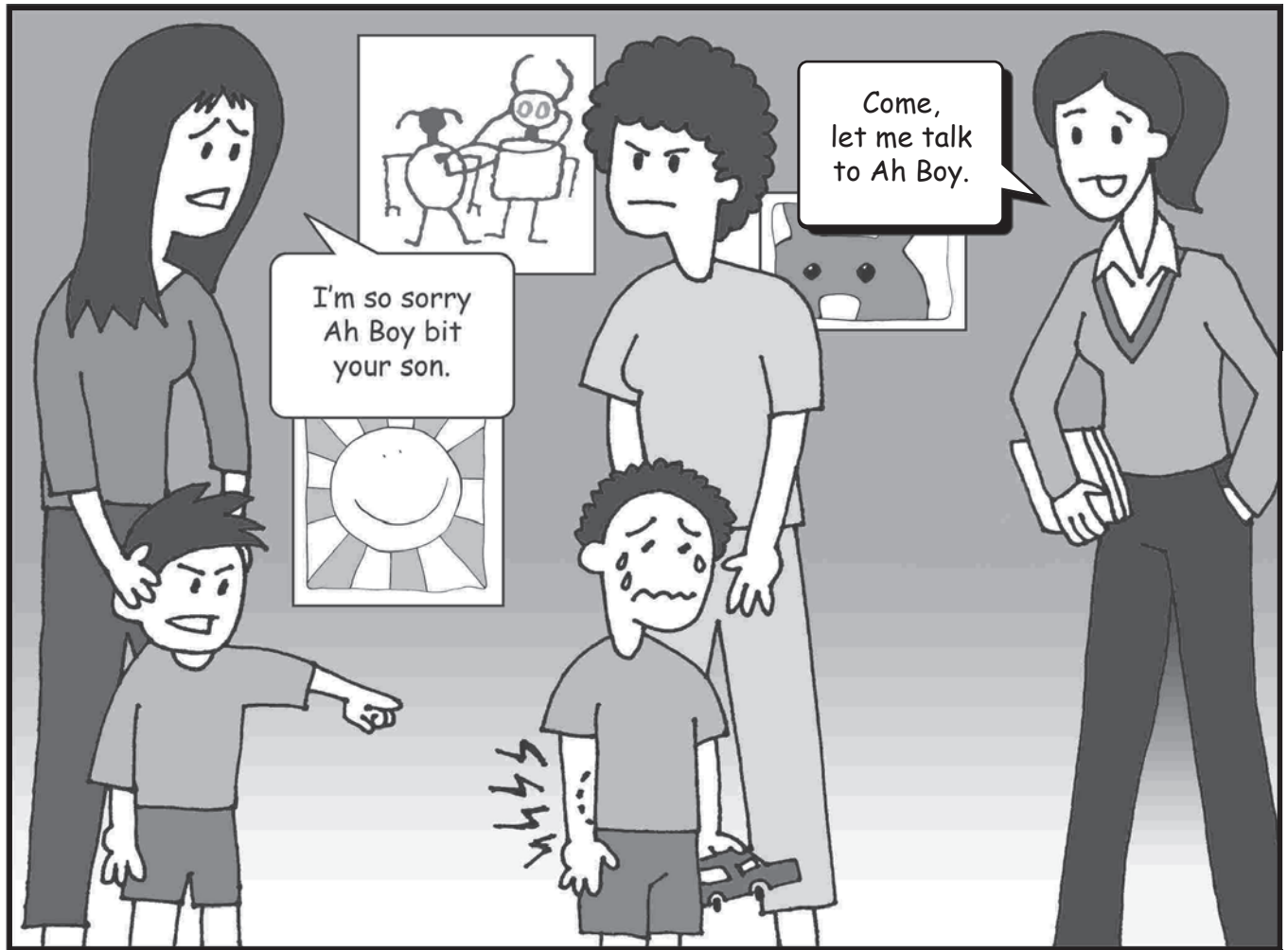


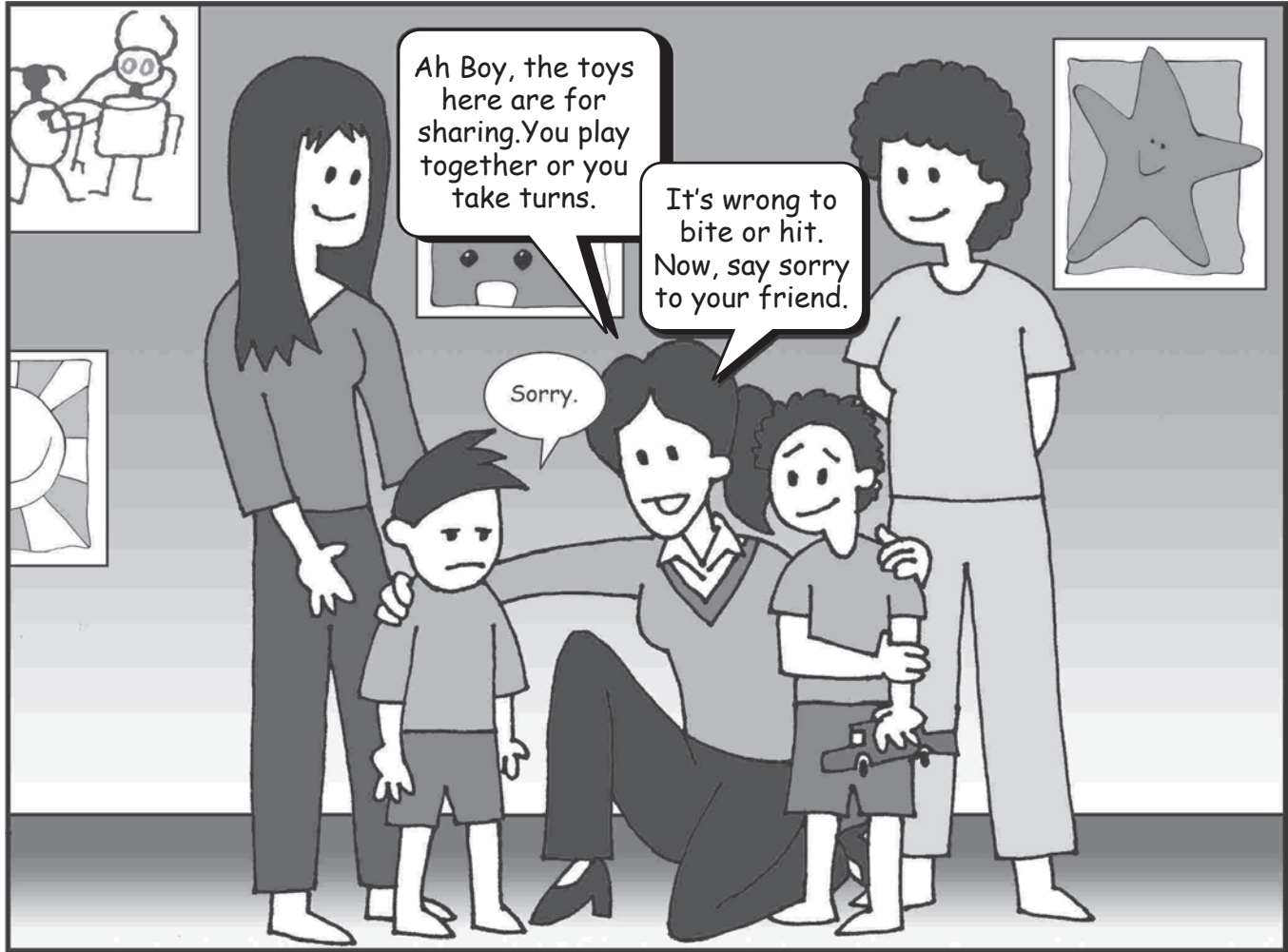
# My Child is Rough

Near dismissal time at Ah Boy's playgroup





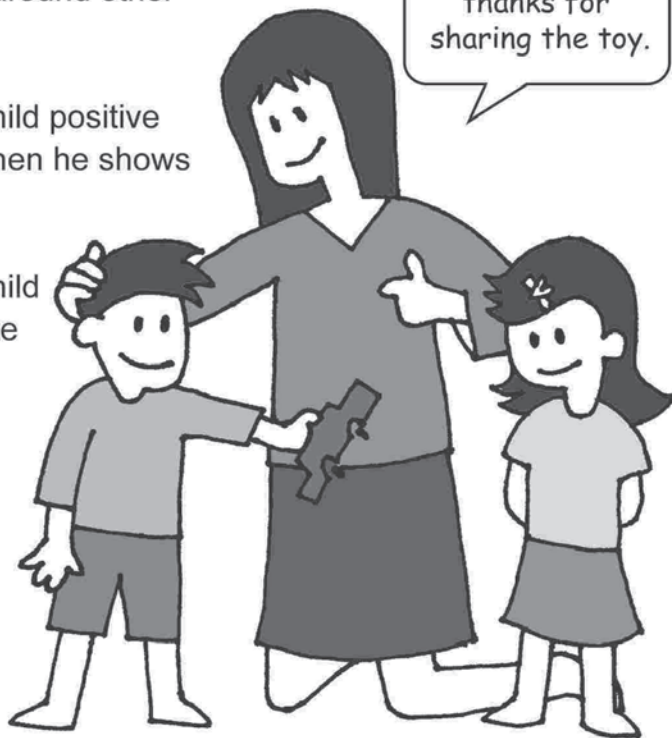




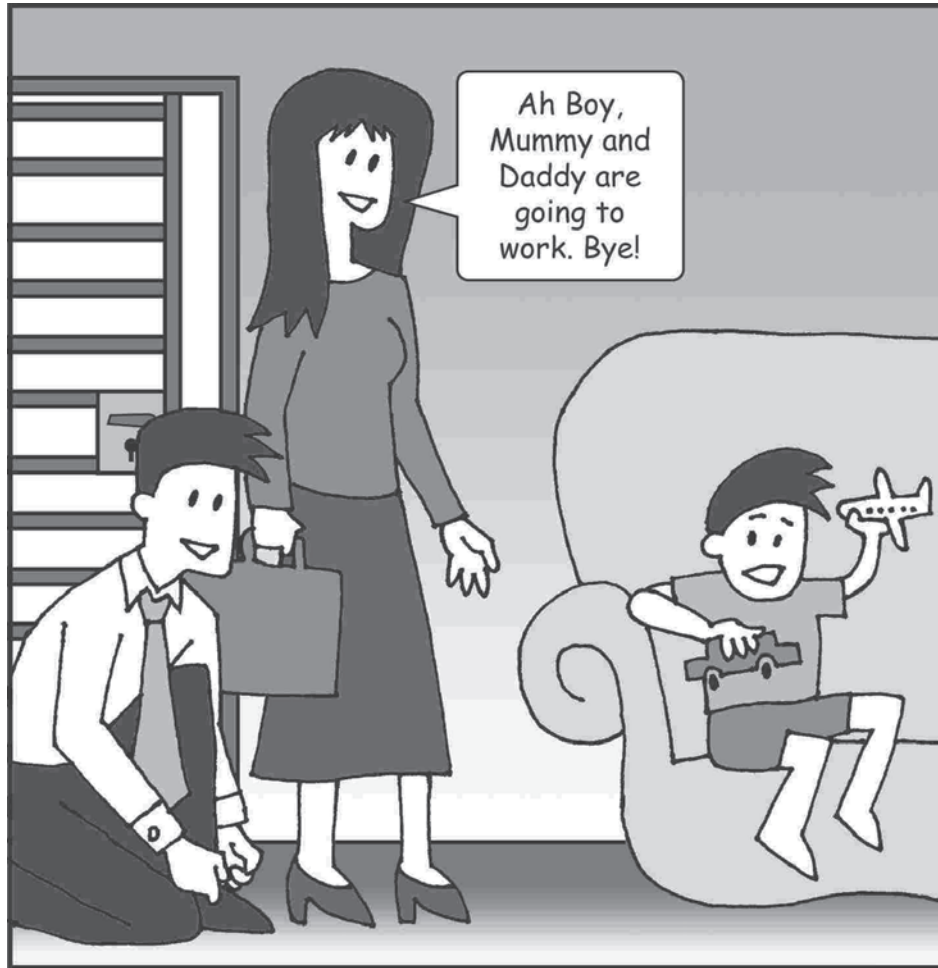
## IN A NUTSHELL

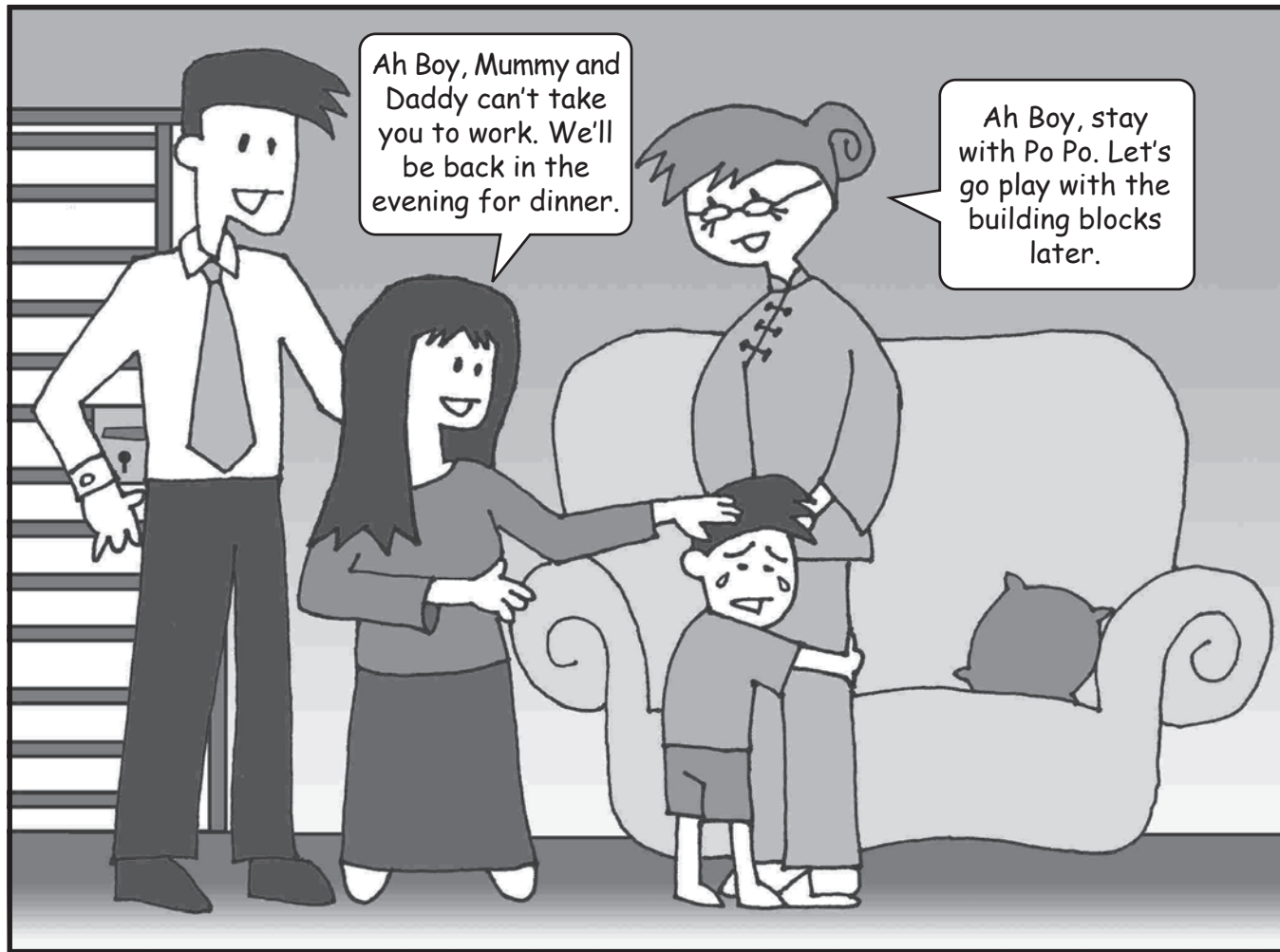
- 🐻 Supervise your child closely when he is around other children.
- 🐻 Give your child positive feedback when he shows self-control.
- 🐻 Help your child communicate and interact with others.

Good boy,  
thanks for  
sharing the toy.



# My Child Cries When I Leave For Work





Ah Boy, Mummy and Daddy can't take you to work. We'll be back in the evening for dinner.

Ah Boy, stay with Po Po. Let's go play with the building blocks later.



## IN A NUTSHELL

- ♥ Explain to your child that your absence is only temporary. He needs assurance to feel secure.
- ♥ Never sneak off.
- ♥ Develop a goodbye ritual and give your child time to adjust to it.



## About Singapore Children's Society

Singapore Children's Society has been fulfilling a very meaningful role to disadvantaged children, youth and their families in Singapore since 1952. We are an independent and non-profit organisation that relies predominantly on public support for many of our programmes, including public education initiatives such as this Parenting Guide.

If you find this Guide useful and would like to contribute towards our programmes, please fill up your particulars and donation details on the following pages and mail it back to us at:

Singapore Children's Society  
No. 298 Tiong Bahru Road  
#09-05 Central Plaza  
Singapore 168730

Your kind donation will help us touch the lives of needy children and youths and allow us to commit to our mission of bringing relief and happiness to children in need.



## PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Yes, I wish to make a donation

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With effect from January 2011, we will need your NRIC number to help you get your tax deduction from donations due to IRAS requirements.

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I would like to donate via GIRO. Please send me a GIRO form.

I would like to subscribe to "Sunbeam" – Singapore Children's Society's quarterly newsletter.

Singapore Children's Society is an Institution of Public Character and all local donations qualify for 2.5 times tax exemption benefits. For more information about us, please visit our website at [www.childrensociety.org.sg](http://www.childrensociety.org.sg).

If you have any feedback for us, please contact us at [info@childrensociety.org.sg](mailto:info@childrensociety.org.sg) or **6273 2010**.

Thank you for your support!

## OTHER TITLES IN THIS PARENTING GUIDE SERIES

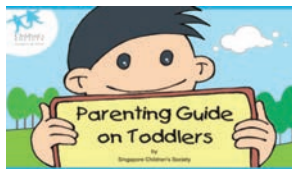
(downloadable from <http://childrensociety.org.sg>)



### PARENTING GUIDE ON BABIES

This is the first in our series of parenting guides. This guide aims to provide parents with useful tips on how to care for their baby, from birth to one year old.

Topics include 'My baby won't stop crying', 'My baby chews on everything' and 'My baby dislikes baths'.



### PARENTING GUIDE ON TODDLERS

The second guide in this series helps parents to understand the behaviour of toddlers from one to three years old. It gives parents suggestions on how to cope when their child misbehaves.

Topics include 'My child won't sit still', 'My child won't listen to me' and 'My child is rough'.



### PARENTING GUIDE ON PRE-SCHOOLERS

(Available in English, Chinese and Malay)

Through a series of light-hearted illustrations, these guides provide tips on how parents can handle difficult situations with their pre-schooler, aged four to six, and explains why he may be behaving in a certain way.

Topics include 'My child wants my attention all the time', 'My child cannot concentrate' and 'My child tells lies'.

You may also find the following useful in your journey as a parent:

#### Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention microsite

<http://preventchildabuse.childrensociety.org.sg/>

#### e-CSEW Directory

<http://csewdirectory.childrensociety.org.sg/>

We hope the tips in this guide will come in handy whenever you are unsure of how to manage your toddler. Most importantly, enjoy your parenting journey as happy parents make happy children.

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to Mrs Maria Shiu and the other members of the Research and Advocacy Standing Committee (RASC) for their help and advice in putting this guide together.

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