



Includes
activity
guide for
adults

Bounce Back!

A book about resilience



free spirit
PUBLISHING®

Cheri J. Meiners ★ **illustrated by Elizabeth Allen**



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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Meiners, Cheri J., 1957–

Bounce back! / Cheri J. Meiners, M.Ed. ; illustrated by Elizabeth Allen.

pages cm. — (Being the best me!)

ISBN-13: 978-1-57542-459-0 (paperback)

ISBN-10: 1-57542-459-2 (paperback)

ISBN-13: 978-1-57542-457-6 (hardcover)

ISBN-10: 1-57542-457-6 (hardcover)

1. Resilience (Personality trait) in children—Juvenile literature. 2. Resilience (Personality trait)—Juvenile literature. 3. Adjustment (Psychology) in children—Juvenile literature. I. Allen, Elizabeth (Artist) illustrator. II. Title.

BF723.R46M45 2014

155.4'191—dc23

2014001610

ISBN: 978-1-57542-459-0

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Cover and interior design by Tasha Kenyon
Edited by Marjorie Lisovskis

Free Spirit Publishing

An imprint of Teacher Created Materials

9850 51st Avenue North, Suite 100

Minneapolis, MN 55442

(612) 338-2068

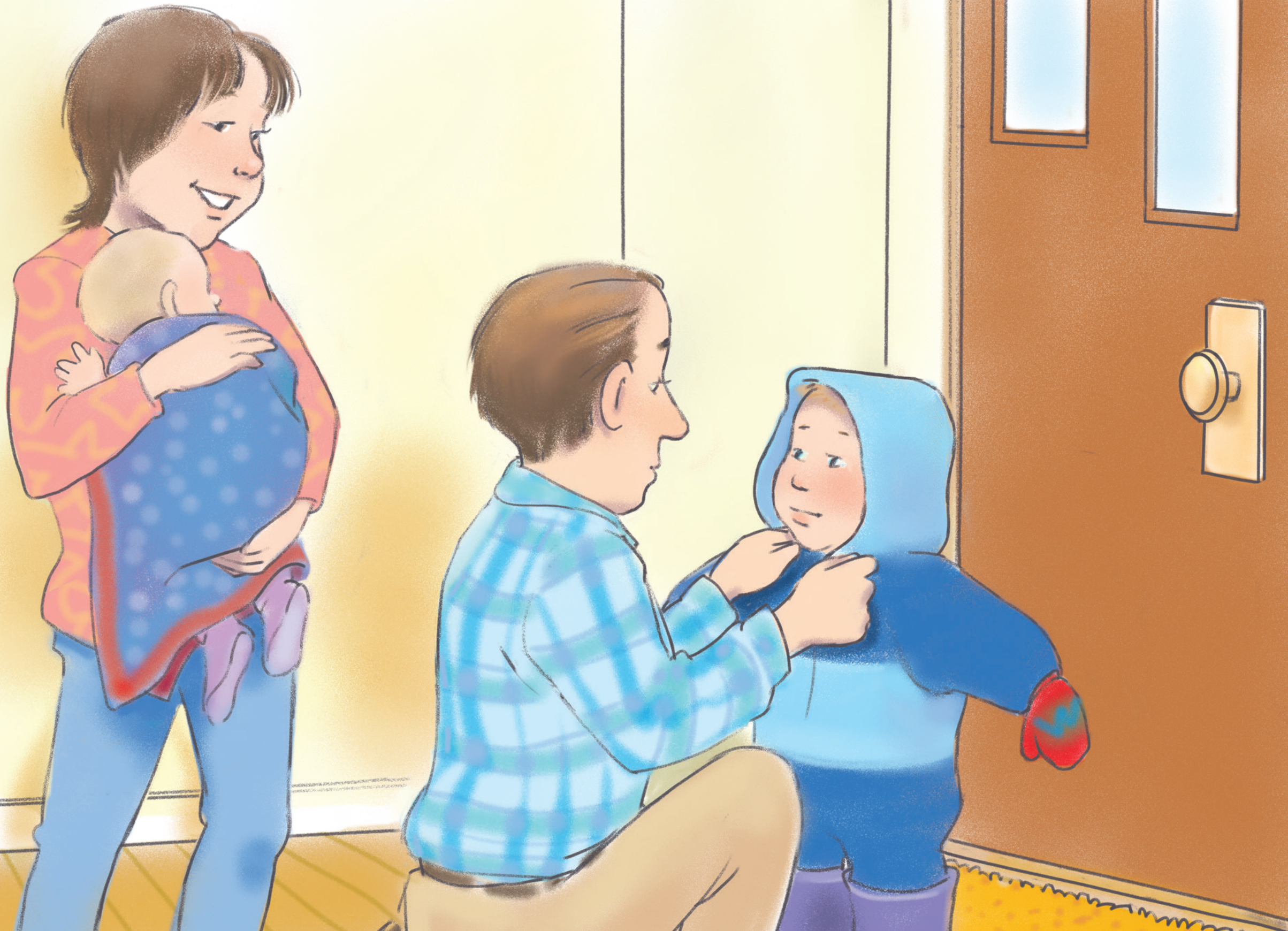
help4kids@freespirit.com

freespirit.com



To my mother, Varna, for savoring life
despite its setbacks, and for her unwavering
confidence that I can tackle anything





I'm learning to take care of myself
and to solve my own problems.



Hard things can happen to anyone at any time.

My problem might seem really big.
I may feel lots of things at once.



Ways to Reinforce the Ideas in Bounce Back!

Bounce Back! teaches resilience, which is the ability to recover readily from challenges, hurt, loss, and adversity. It includes having realistic and positive thought processes and behaviors that help one bounce back from problems. In addition, children learn that they have important relationships that can be a support to them in times of difficulty. Having resilience is a guard against feelings of helplessness and depression, and can lead to improved physical and mental health, better school performance, greater feelings of fulfillment, improved relationships, and a greater sense of control over one's life—all of which can lead to greater happiness. Children can learn resilience by becoming more familiar with their own patterns of thinking and adopting some of the principles discussed in this book and supported by the activities on pages 33–35.

Note: The skills and activities taught in the book can support children in facing typical setbacks and challenges. Children who learn and internalize resilience for handling everyday challenges can be helped to apply the same concepts to larger issues as well. Because serious problems are frightening and better addressed individually, such situations are not explicitly part of the text and activities. Pay attention to children facing struggles that are beyond the book's scope and require adult sensitivity and intervention. Consult with parents and professionals to seek needed support.

Words to know:

Here are terms you may want to discuss.

admit: to agree or tell the truth about something

blame: to say that something is a person's fault

brave: confident; willing to do something hard

bounce back: to feel better and keep going after something bad or hard happens

choose: to want; to decide; to make a choice

decide: to make up your mind

hope: the feeling that things will be okay or that good things will happen

memories: things and ideas that you remember

patient: able to stay calm and not complain when something is hard

resilient: able to bounce back

strength: strongness; the ability to do hard things

As you read each spread, ask children:

- What is happening in this picture?
- What is the main idea?
- How would you feel if you were this person?

Here are additional questions you might like to discuss:

Pages 1–13

- Think about a time that you felt you had a big problem. (*You might prompt: "Maybe you had a tummy ache," "Maybe someone took something of yours."*) How did you feel?
- What does it mean to think about your problem in a new way? Tell about a time you tried that. What happened?
- What does it mean to find the good in what happens?
- What does it mean to bounce back?
- What are some little things that you can let go of?

Pages 14–17

- How do you feel when you do something all on your own? When you do something for the first time? Tell about something you can do on your own.
- Think about a time that you made a mistake and tried to fix it. What happened? How did you feel?

- What does it mean to admit a mistake? Why is it important for us to admit our mistakes and try to fix them?

Pages 18–23

- What are some problems this girl can't change? How is she helping herself bounce back?
- Think of a time when something hard happened for you. What did you do? What did you learn from having the problem? Were you able to bounce back? How? If not, how could you have helped yourself bounce back?
- What are some of the happy memories in this girl's life? What are some happy memories in *your* life?
- What do you look forward to? How do you feel when you think about those future things? How can looking forward to something good help you through a hard time?

Pages 24–31

- What are some things you feel glad about?
- Name some people that you look up to and trust. What is something these people do that you look up to them for?
- Who is someone *you* can reach out to help? What can you do to help this person?
- How can caring about other people help you worry less about your own problems?
- What is a way that something hard could help you grow?

Resilience Activities and Games

Read this book often with your child or group of children. Once children are familiar with the book, refer to it as a tool to encourage and reinforce positive, resilient behavior as well as to help children handle difficult emotions they experience. In addition, use the following activities to support children's understanding of ways they can bounce back from stresses, challenges, and change.

On individual 3" x 5" cards, write scenarios like the following. Make as many cards as you wish and plan to use your set of scenario cards in the activities that follow.

Sample Scenario Cards

- Ava didn't want to go back to school after the first day.
- Darius didn't do well on his math test.
- Jacob was playing basketball and missed the shot.
- A child told Luci she couldn't play with the group.
- Maya's teacher told her to stay in at recess to finish her work.
- Liam's sister teased him about his reading.
- Hassan's dad said that he was too little to help with the barbecue.
- Arya's desk was moved beside a new child's desk.
- Sophia needed help writing a card to her grandpa.
- Marco was playing with a toy, and his brother took it away.

"How I Bounce Back" Poster

Materials: Drawing paper; pencils; crayons or markers

Directions: Discuss challenges children may typically face, and help children think of a difficult experience they have had. Then have children fold their paper in half horizontally. On the left, have them draw a picture of their challenge. On the right, ask them to draw a picture of how they got through it or a positive way they could bounce back from the situation.

My "Bounce Back" Song

Directions: Having a song that you can sing to yourself when you need some reassurance is one way to bounce back when you are feeling down. Help children choose a favorite song that makes them feel happy and hopeful. If possible, find the song for them to listen to. (*Note:* You may decide to learn a "happy" song together. Adding a regular singing time in your schedule can be a great stress reliever for children.)