

Top Tips and Tricks



The authors of this booklet are young people who have a range of strengths and difficulties because they have a neurodevelopmental disorder(s), they are happy to describe themselves as having a neurodiverse profile.

In this booklet the authors have shared their ideas, top tips and tricks that they use to help them find an easier way of managing every day things. Most of the ideas and top tips have been used by a number of the authors and it was only when coming together to write this booklet that they realised they sometimes did the same thing as other young people.

The authors are thrilled to be able to share their expertise with you and ask that you also add your own tips and tricks at the back of the booklet so you can share them with other young people.

Foreward

“I hope that you will enjoy reading this book as much as I and the other authors enjoyed writing it.

Hopefully you will find a useful tip or two. I know I definitely found some that helped me.”

Hester

Contents

Section 1: At home.....pages 4 to 24

Section 2: In school.....pages 25 to 36

Section 3: In my spare time.....pages 37 to 40

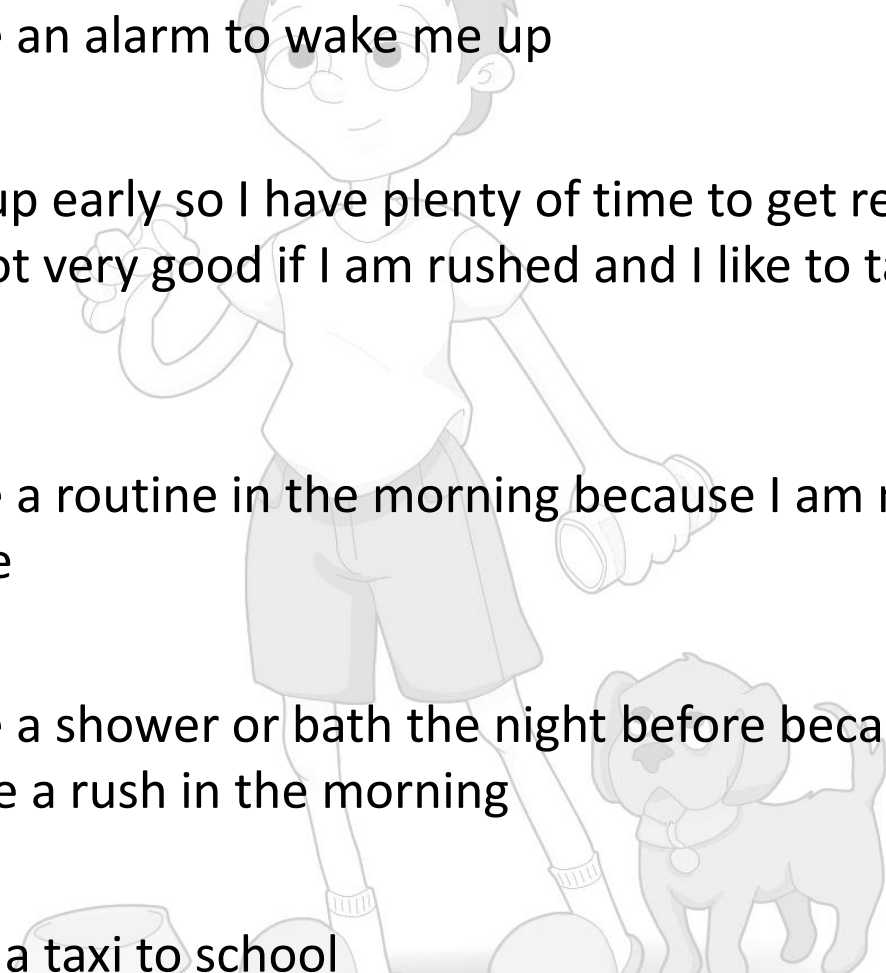
Section 4: When things are rough...pages 41 to 44

At home



At home – Getting ready in the morning

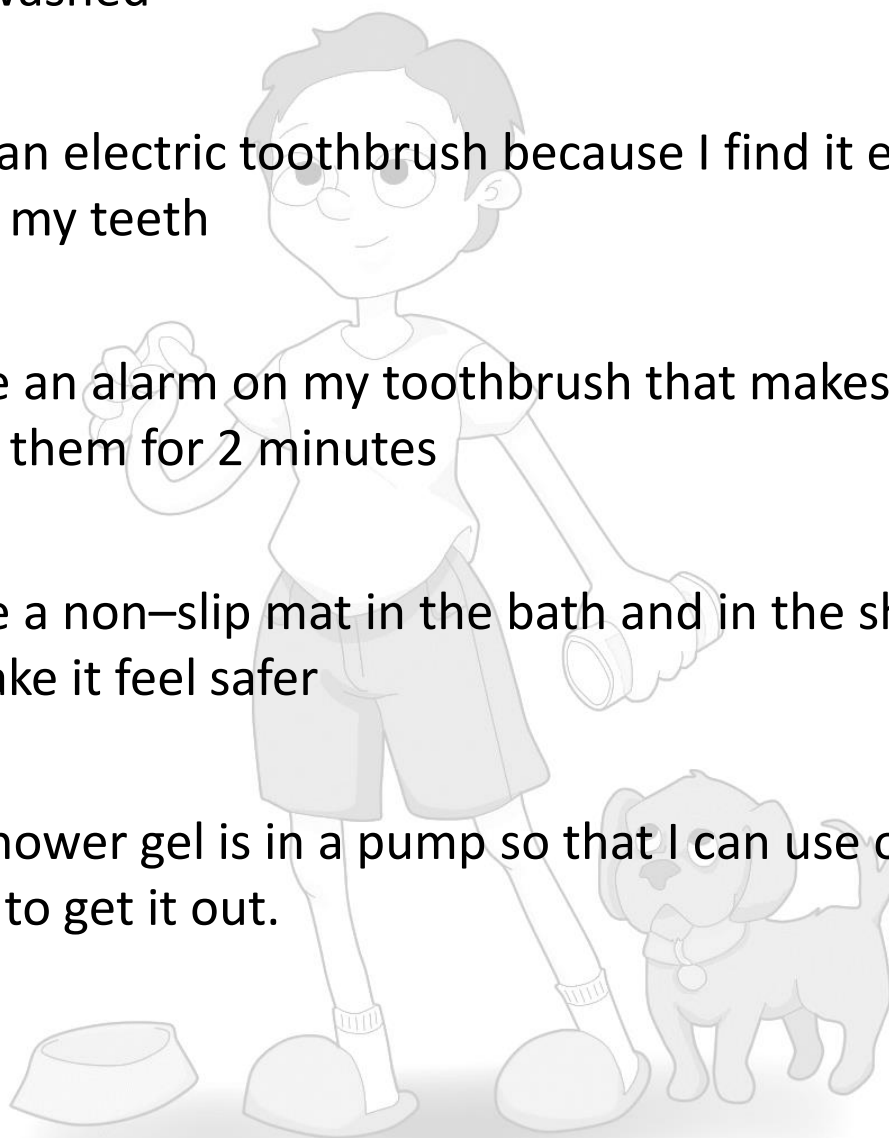
Being organised and on time

- ❖ I have an alarm to wake me up
 - ❖ I get up early so I have plenty of time to get ready – I am not very good if I am rushed and I like to take my time
 - ❖ I have a routine in the morning because I am not that awake
 - ❖ I have a shower or bath the night before because it can be a rush in the morning
 - ❖ I take a taxi to school
- 

At home – Getting ready in the morning

Getting washed

- ❖ I use an electric toothbrush because I find it easier to clean my teeth
- ❖ I have an alarm on my toothbrush that makes sure I clean them for 2 minutes
- ❖ I have a non-slip mat in the bath and in the shower to make it feel safer
- ❖ My shower gel is in a pump so that I can use one hand to get it out.



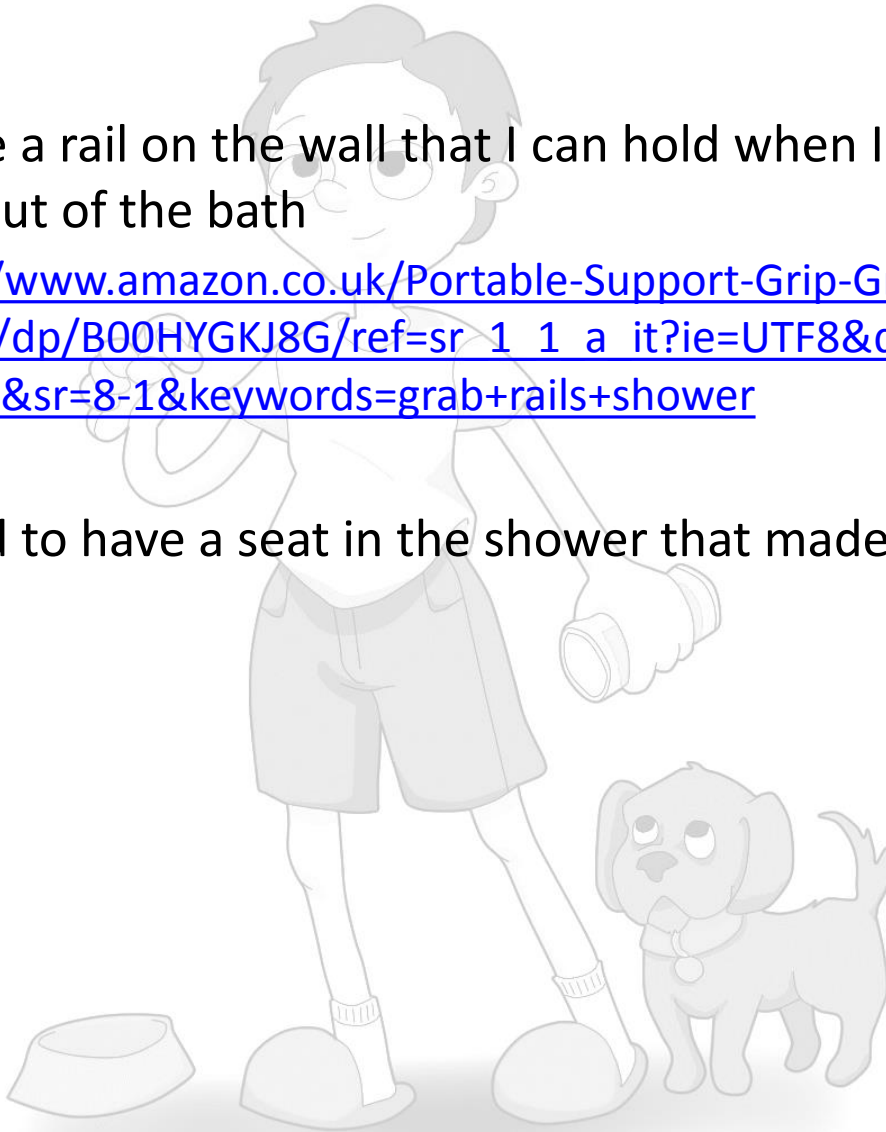
At home – Getting ready in the morning

Getting washed

- ❖ I have a rail on the wall that I can hold when I get in and out of the bath

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Portable-Support-Grip-Grab-Handle/dp/B00HYGKJ8G/ref=sr_1_1_a_it?ie=UTF8&qid=1476207148&sr=8-1&keywords=grab+rails+shower

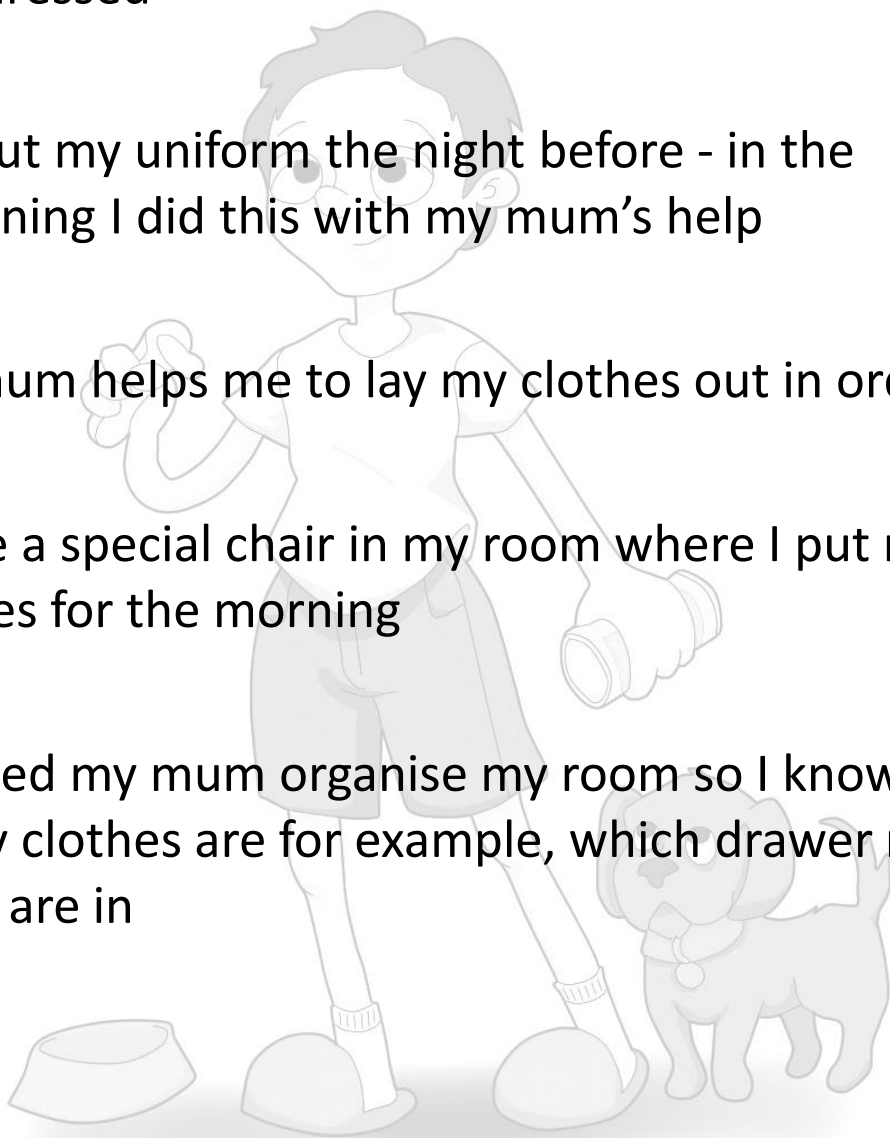
- ❖ I used to have a seat in the shower that made me feel safer



At home – Getting ready in the morning

Getting dressed

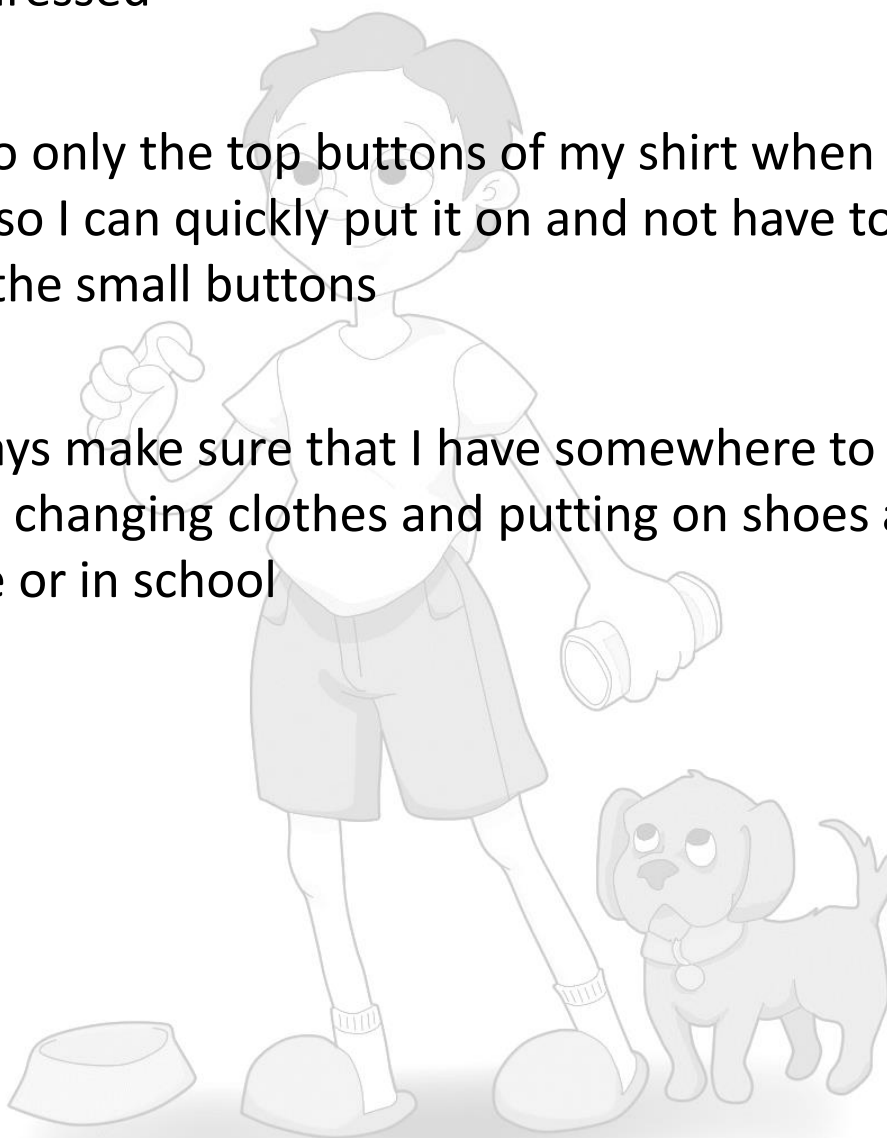
- ❖ I layout my uniform the night before - in the beginning I did this with my mum's help
- ❖ My mum helps me to lay my clothes out in order
- ❖ I have a special chair in my room where I put my clothes for the morning
- ❖ I helped my mum organise my room so I know where all my clothes are for example, which drawer my socks are in



At home – Getting ready in the morning

Getting dressed

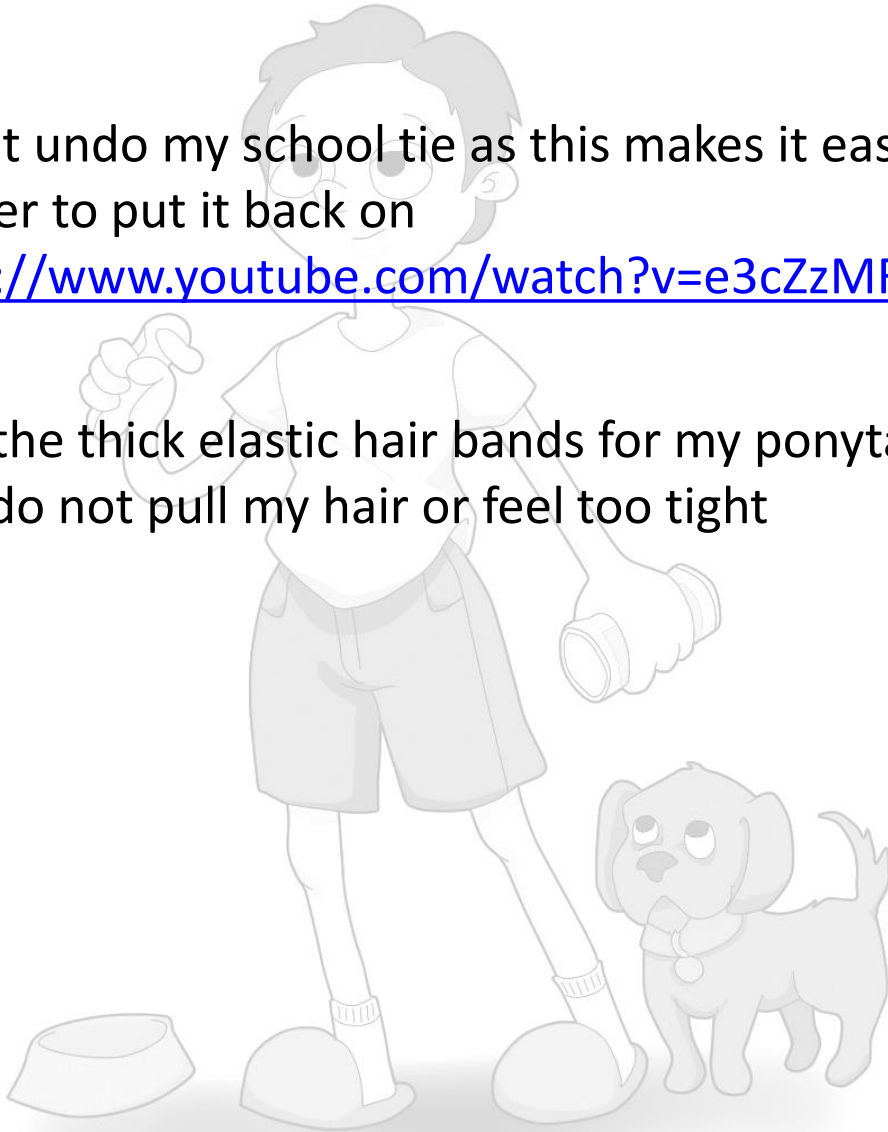
- ❖ I undo only the top buttons of my shirt when taking it off so I can quickly put it on and not have to fiddle with the small buttons
- ❖ I always make sure that I have somewhere to sit when changing clothes and putting on shoes at home or in school



At home – Getting ready in the morning

Getting dressed

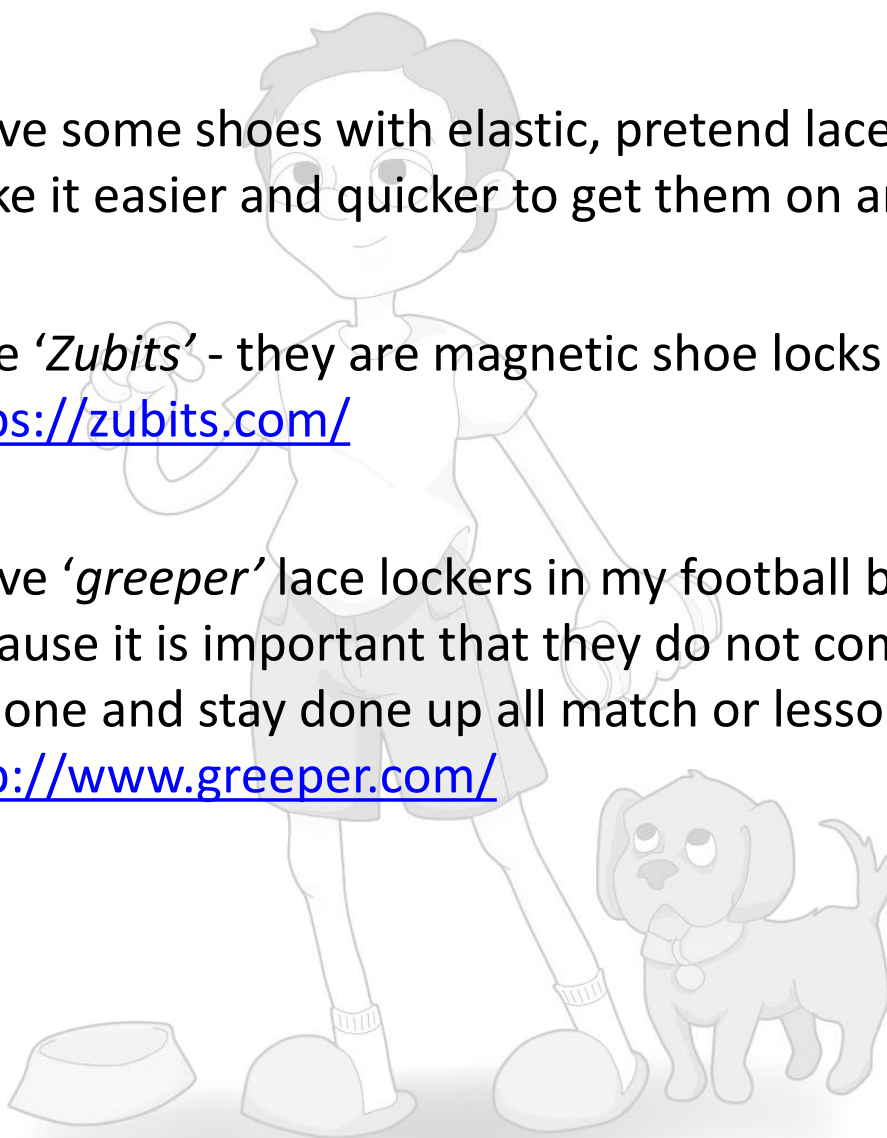
- ❖ I don't undo my school tie as this makes it easier and quicker to put it back on
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3cZzMRGWTc>
- ❖ I like the thick elastic hair bands for my ponytail as they do not pull my hair or feel too tight



At home – Getting ready in the morning

Putting on shoes

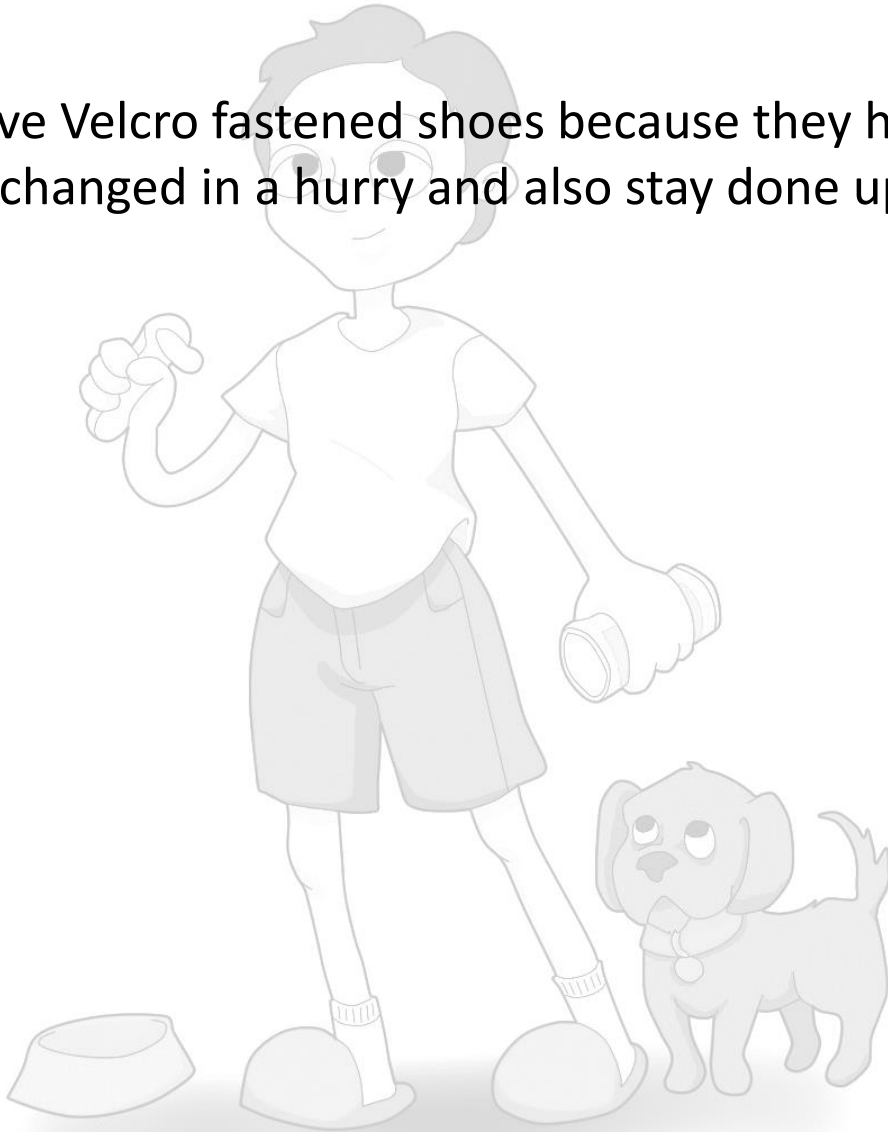
- ❖ I have some shoes with elastic, pretend laces to make it easier and quicker to get them on and off
- ❖ I use 'Zubits' - they are magnetic shoe locks
<https://zubits.com/>
- ❖ I have 'greeper' lace lockers in my football boots because it is important that they do not come undone and stay done up all match or lesson
<http://www.greeper.com/>



At home – Getting ready in the morning

Putting on shoes

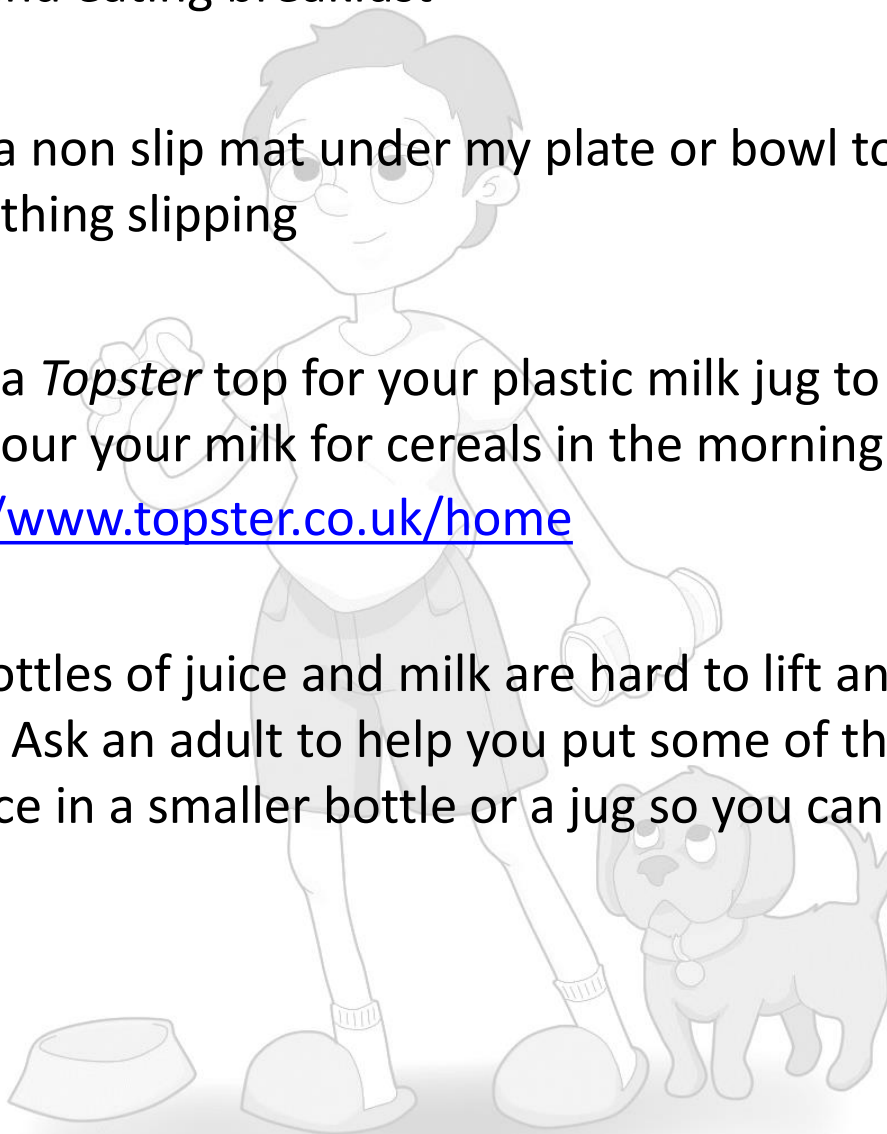
- ❖ I have Velcro fastened shoes because they help me get changed in a hurry and also stay done up



At home – Getting ready in the morning

Making and eating breakfast

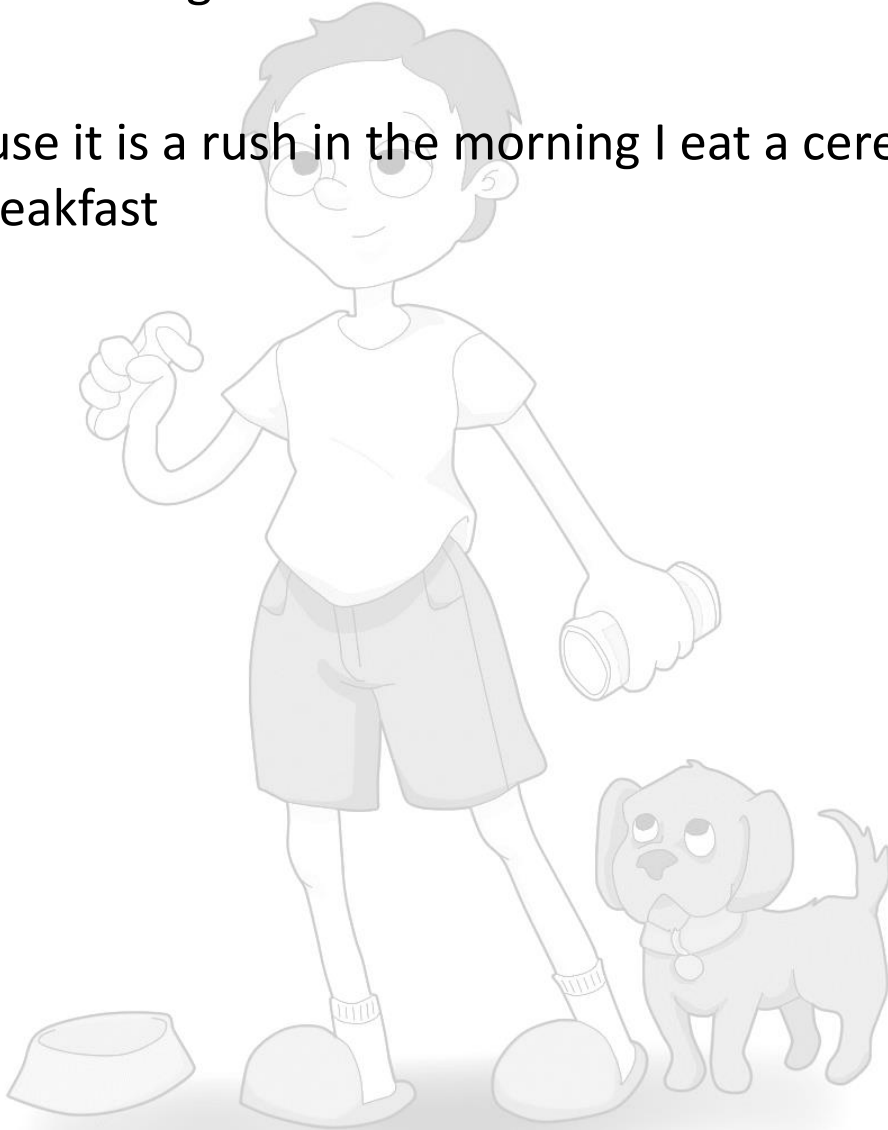
- ❖ I put a non slip mat under my plate or bowl to stop everything slipping
- ❖ Have a *Topster* top for your plastic milk jug to help you pour your milk for cereals in the morning
<http://www.topster.co.uk/home>
- ❖ Big bottles of juice and milk are hard to lift and pour from. Ask an adult to help you put some of the milk or juice in a smaller bottle or a jug so you can pour it.



At home – Getting ready in the morning

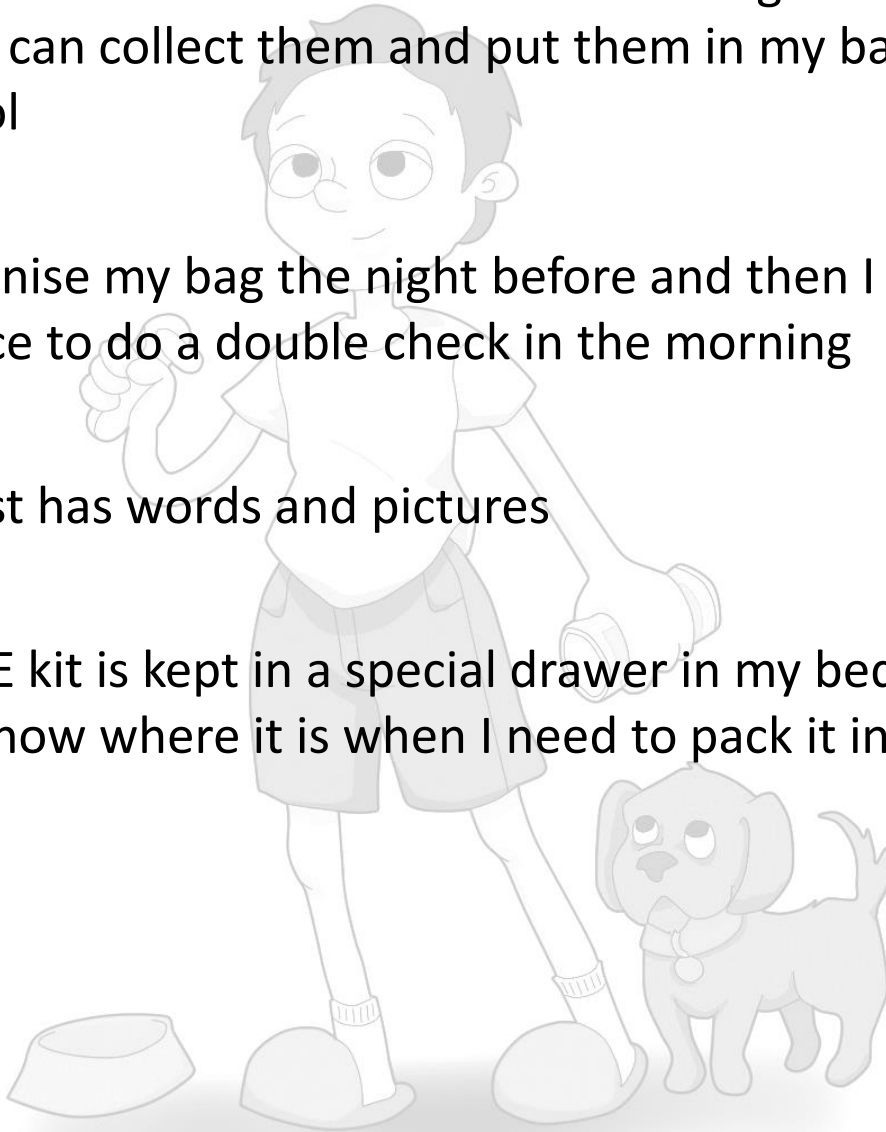
Making and eating breakfast

- ❖ Because it is a rush in the morning I eat a cereal bar for breakfast



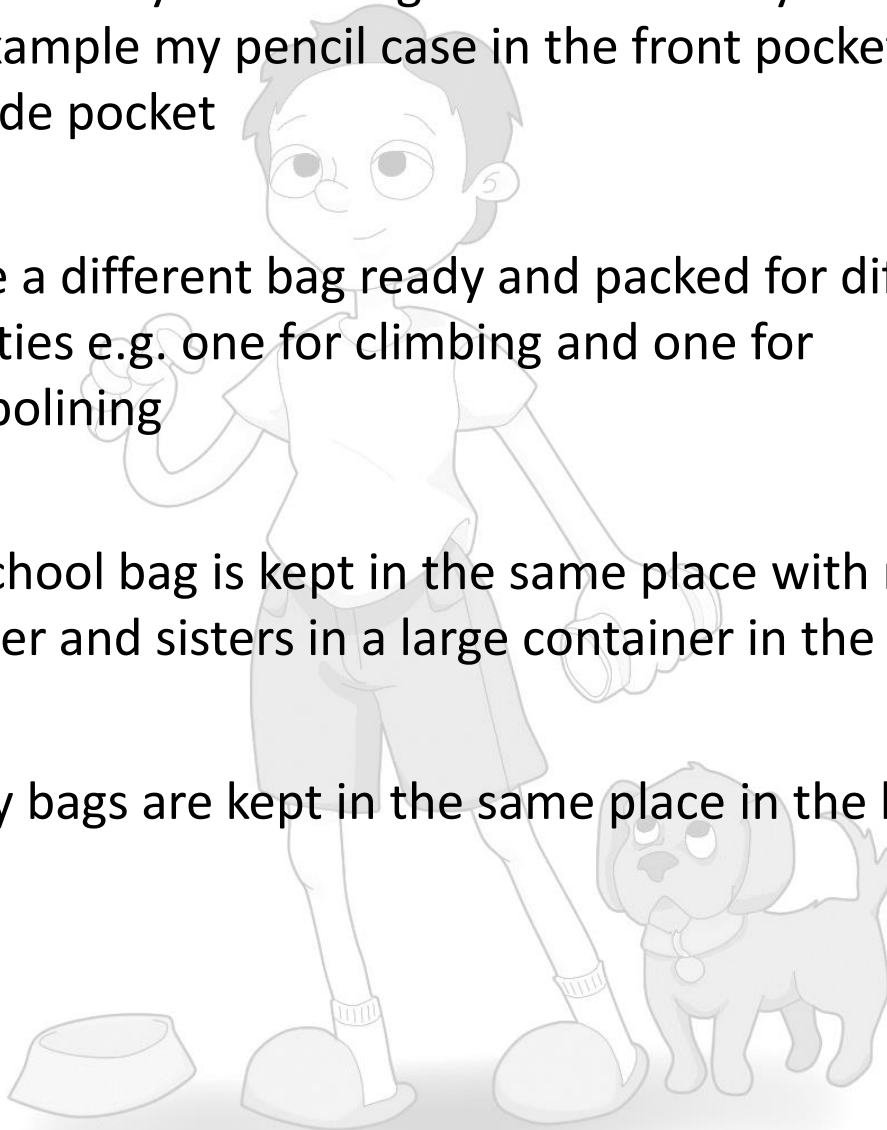
At home – Remembering what to take to school

- ❖ I have a list or chart that has all the things I need on it so I can collect them and put them in my bag for school
- ❖ I organise my bag the night before and then I have chance to do a double check in the morning
- ❖ My list has words and pictures
- ❖ My PE kit is kept in a special drawer in my bedroom so I know where it is when I need to pack it in my bag



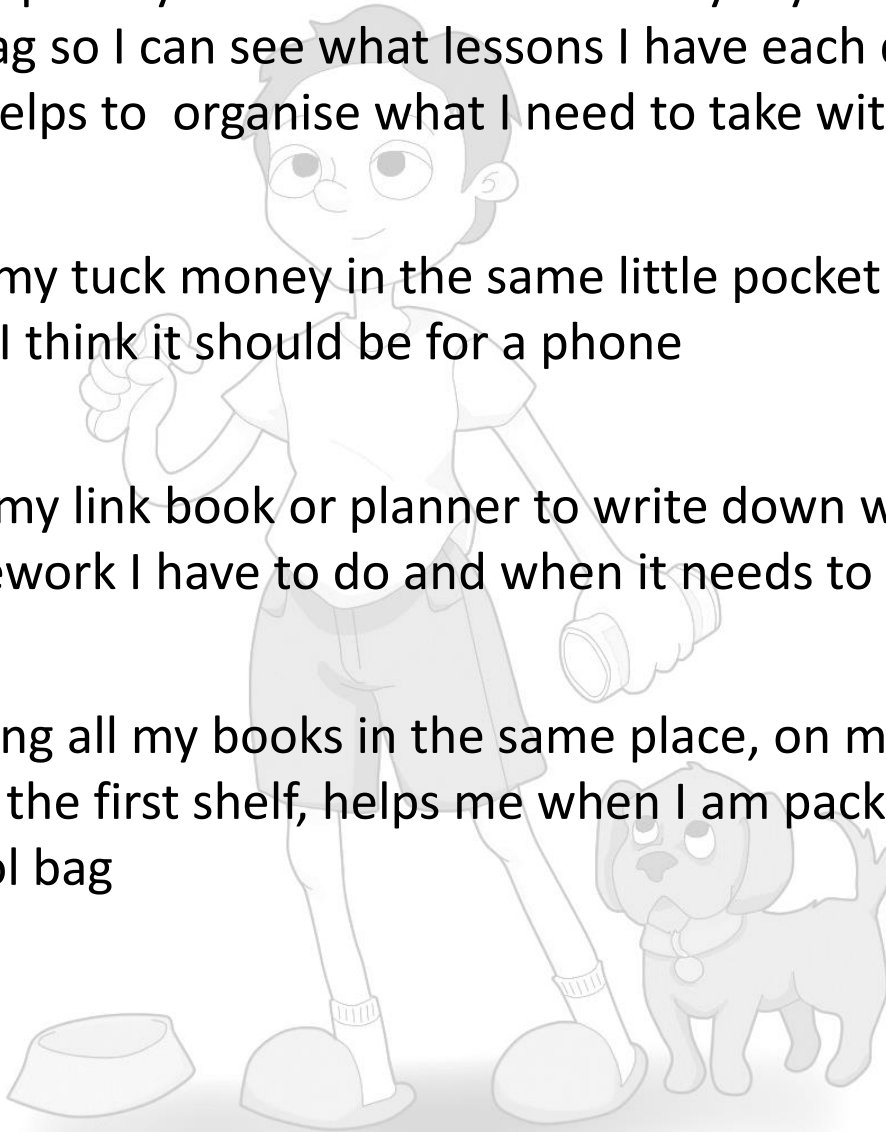
At home – Remembering what to take to school

- ❖ I organise my school bag in the same way every day for example my pencil case in the front pocket drink in the side pocket
- ❖ I have a different bag ready and packed for different activities e.g. one for climbing and one for trampolining
- ❖ My school bag is kept in the same place with my brother and sisters in a large container in the hall way
- ❖ All my bags are kept in the same place in the bedroom



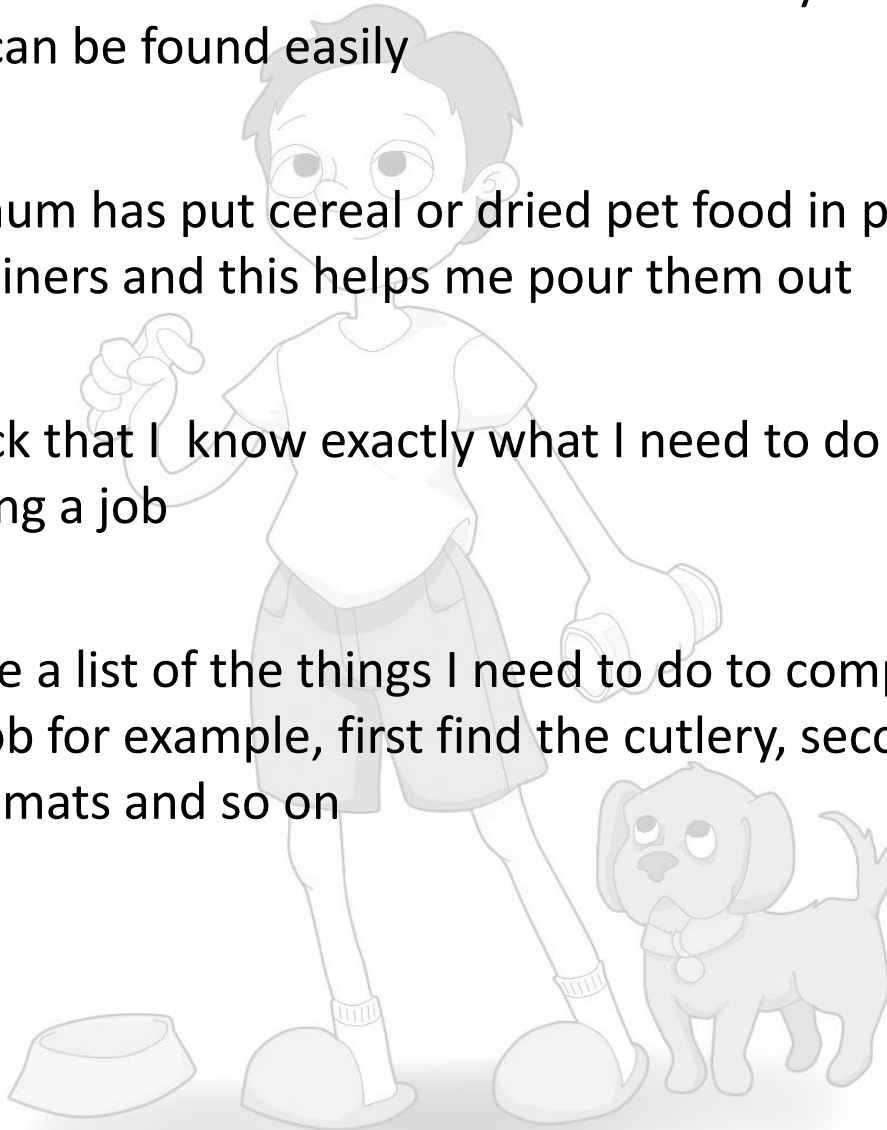
At home – Remembering what to take to school

- ❖ I have put my timetable on the wall by my bed and in my bag so I can see what lessons I have each day – this helps to organise what I need to take with me
- ❖ I put my tuck money in the same little pocket in my bag - I think it should be for a phone
- ❖ I use my link book or planner to write down what homework I have to do and when it needs to be in
- ❖ Keeping all my books in the same place, on my desk or on the first shelf, helps me when I am packing my school bag



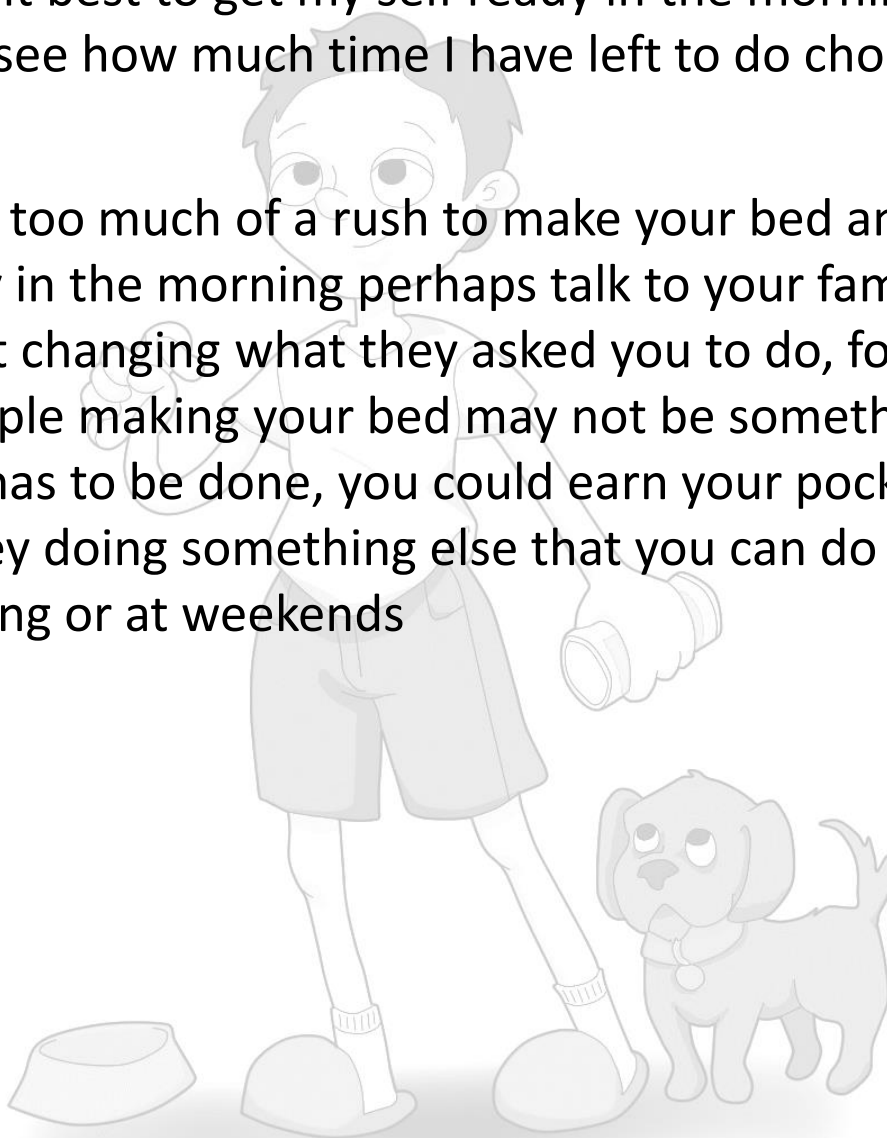
At home – Doing chores

- ❖ I make sure that the items I need to do my chores or jobs can be found easily
- ❖ My mum has put cereal or dried pet food in plastic containers and this helps me pour them out
- ❖ I check that I know exactly what I need to do before starting a job
- ❖ I make a list of the things I need to do to complete the job for example, first find the cutlery, second the table mats and so on



At home – Doing chores

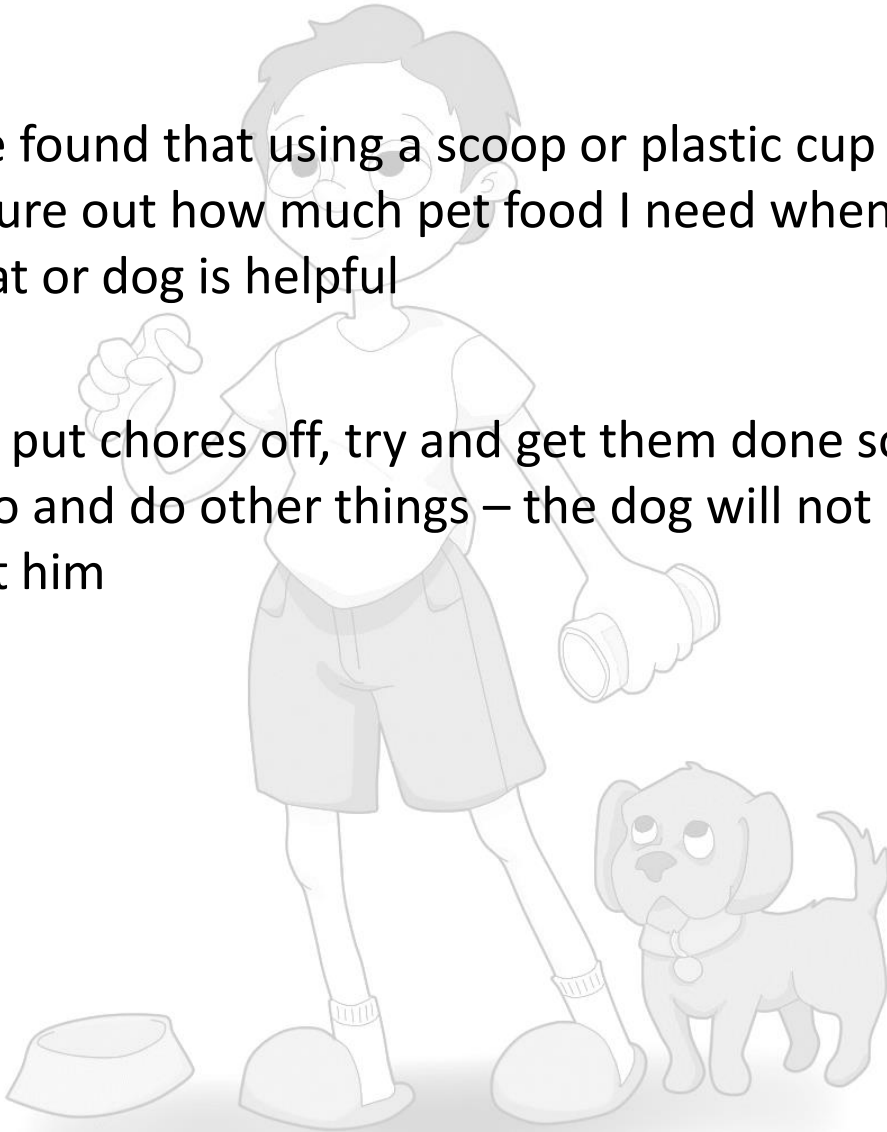
- ❖ I find it best to get my self ready in the morning and then see how much time I have left to do chores
- ❖ If it is too much of a rush to make your bed and get ready in the morning perhaps talk to your family about changing what they asked you to do, for example making your bed may not be something that has to be done, you could earn your pocket money doing something else that you can do in the evening or at weekends



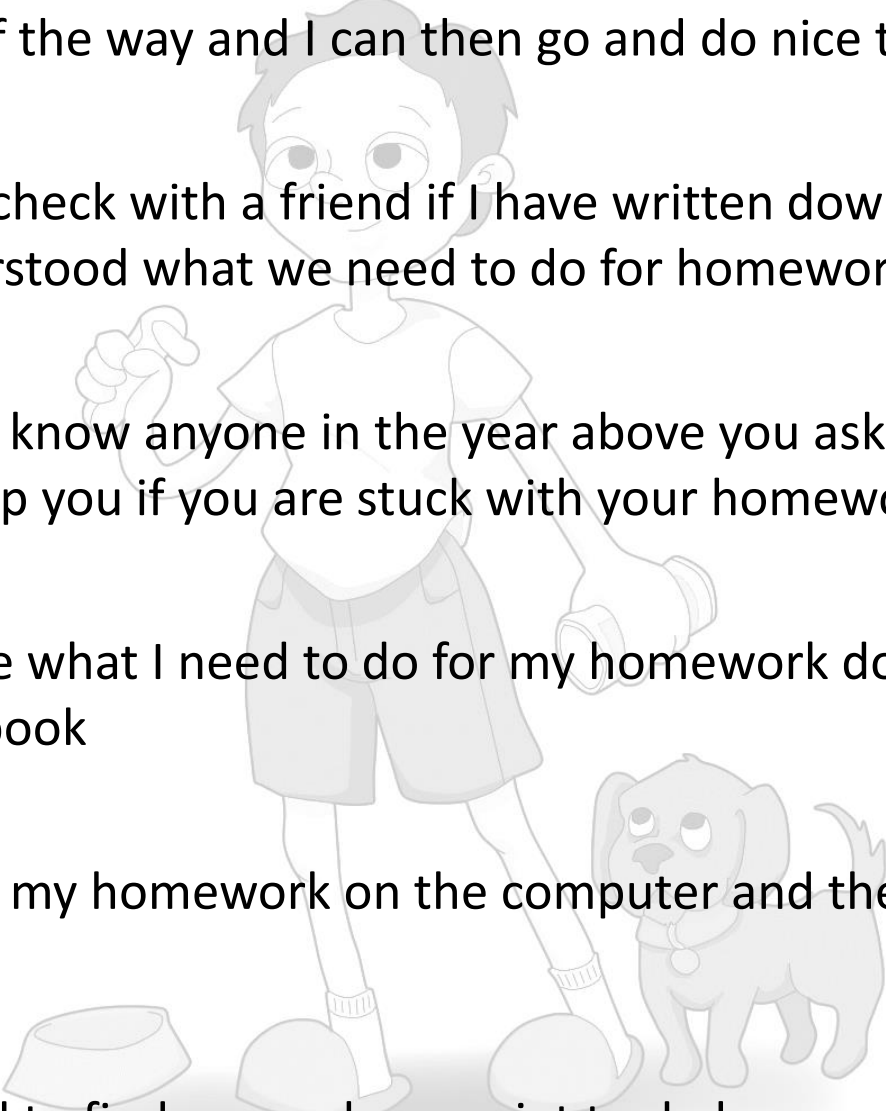
At home – Doing chores

Feeding Pets

- ❖ I have found that using a scoop or plastic cup to measure out how much pet food I need when feeding the cat or dog is helpful
- ❖ Don't put chores off, try and get them done so you can go and do other things – the dog will not let you forget him

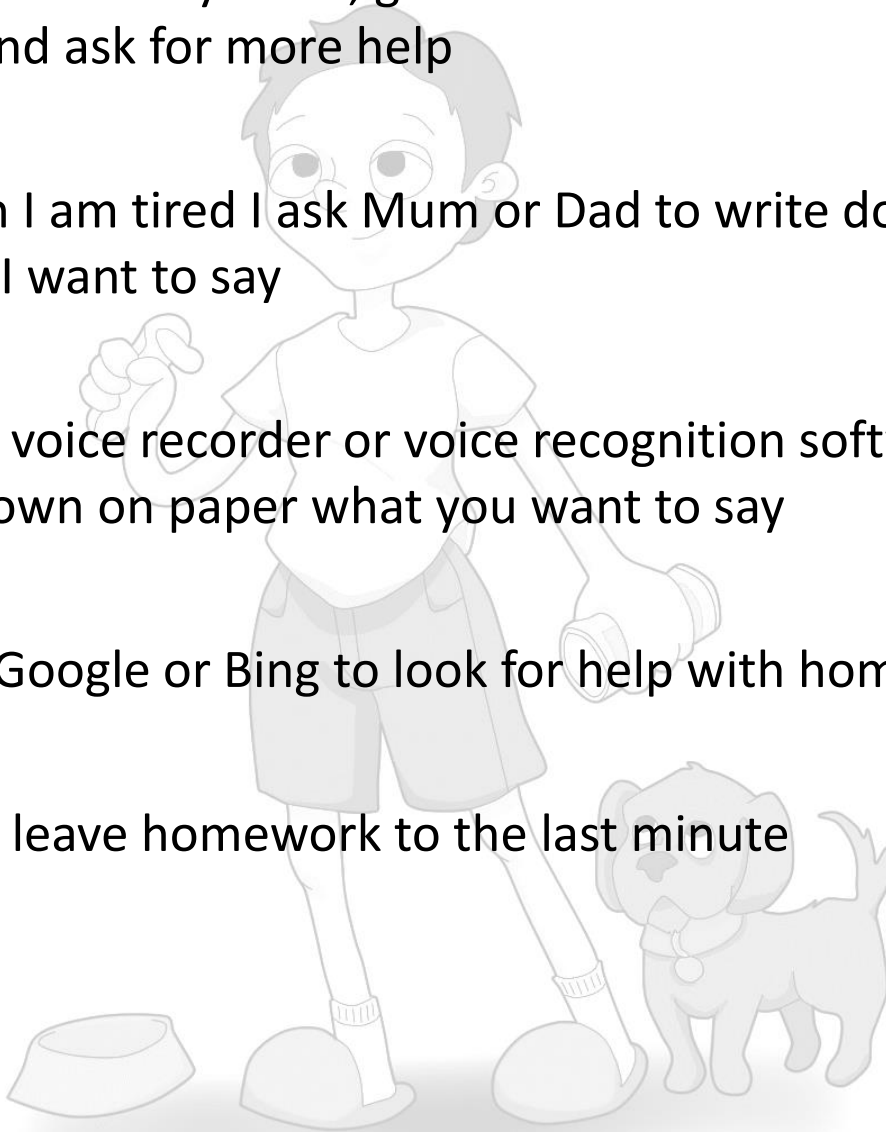


At home - Homework

- ❖ I do my homework as soon as I get it, ASAP, so it is out of the way and I can then go and do nice things
 - ❖ I can check with a friend if I have written down and understood what we need to do for homework
 - ❖ If you know anyone in the year above you ask them to help you if you are stuck with your homework
 - ❖ I write what I need to do for my homework down in a notebook
 - ❖ I type my homework on the computer and then print it out
 - ❖ I need to find somewhere quiet to do homework
- 
- A faint, light-colored illustration of a young boy and a dog. The boy is standing in the center, wearing a t-shirt and shorts, holding a pencil in his right hand and a notebook in his left. To his right is a small, fluffy dog sitting down. In the foreground, there are two bowls, one on the left and one on the right, and a pair of shoes.

At home - Homework

- ❖ If you are really stuck, go back to the teacher the next day and ask for more help
- ❖ When I am tired I ask Mum or Dad to write down what I want to say
- ❖ Use a voice recorder or voice recognition software to get down on paper what you want to say
- ❖ I use Google or Bing to look for help with homework
- ❖ Don't leave homework to the last minute



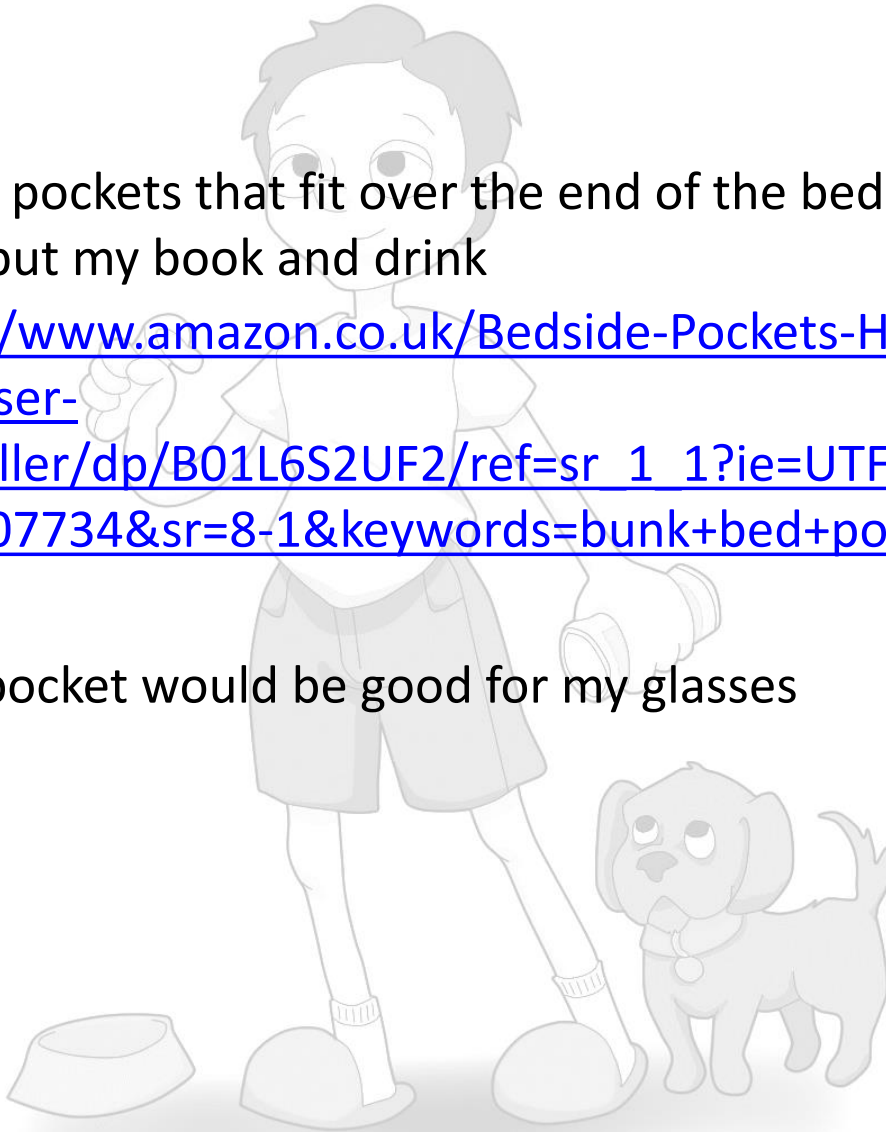
At home – Going to bed

❖ The sides on my bunk bed make me feel cosy and safe

❖ I have pockets that fit over the end of the bed where I can put my book and drink

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bedside-Pockets-Hanging-Organiser-Controller/dp/B01L6S2UF2/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1476207734&sr=8-1&keywords=bunk+bed+pockets

❖ That pocket would be good for my glasses



At home – Going to bed

- ❖ I listen to audiotapes when I go to bed to help me go to sleep
- ❖ I like my bed to be against the wall so I feel safe

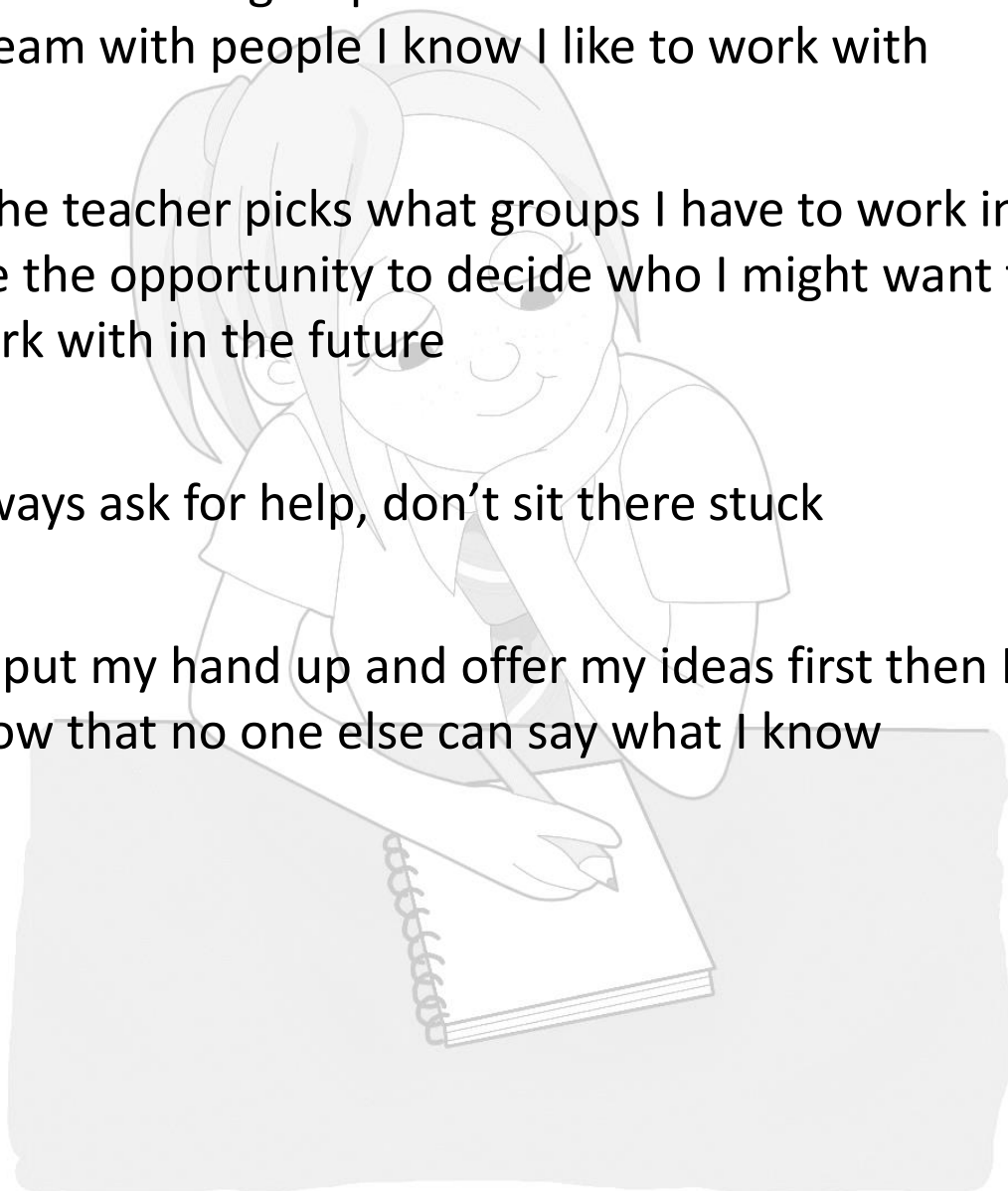


In School

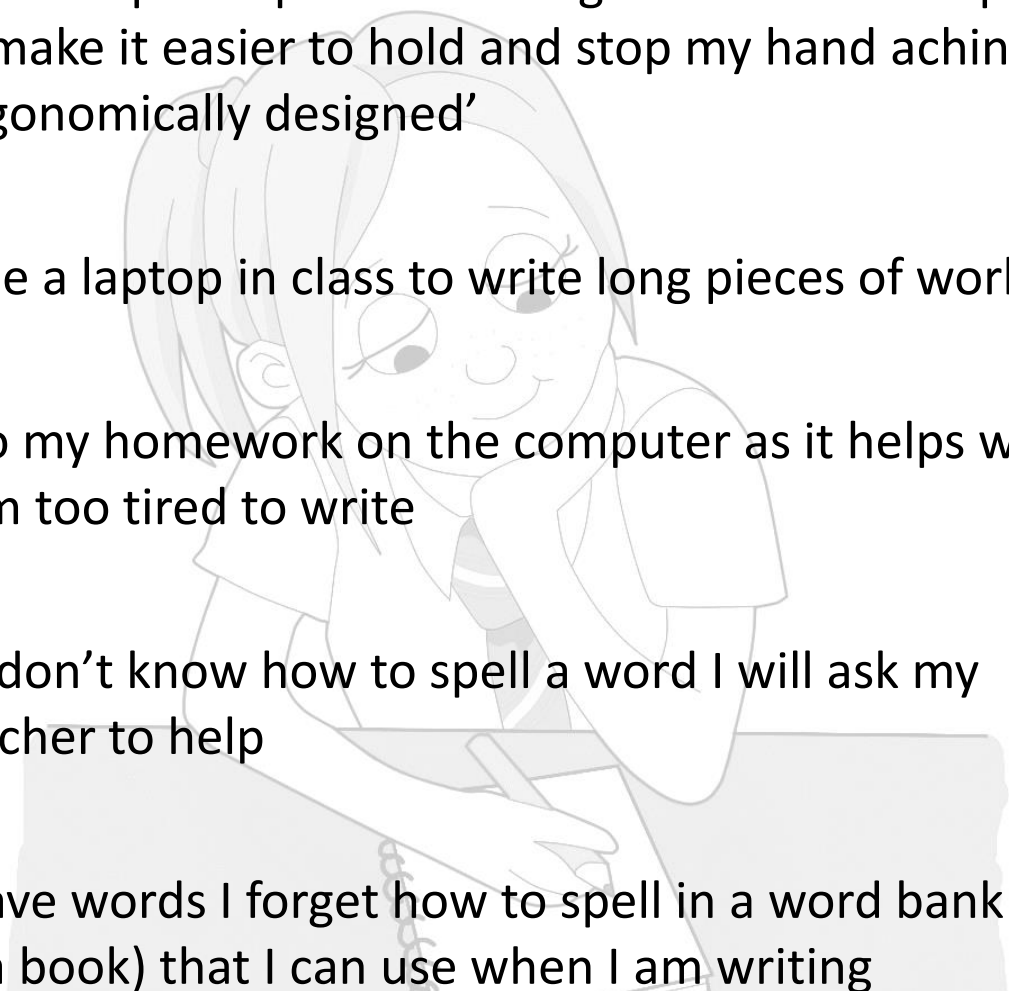


In School – Working in class

- ❖ If I have to do group work in school I choose to be in a team with people I know I like to work with
- ❖ If the teacher picks what groups I have to work in, I use the opportunity to decide who I might want to work with in the future
- ❖ Always ask for help, don't sit there stuck
- ❖ If I put my hand up and offer my ideas first then I know that no one else can say what I know

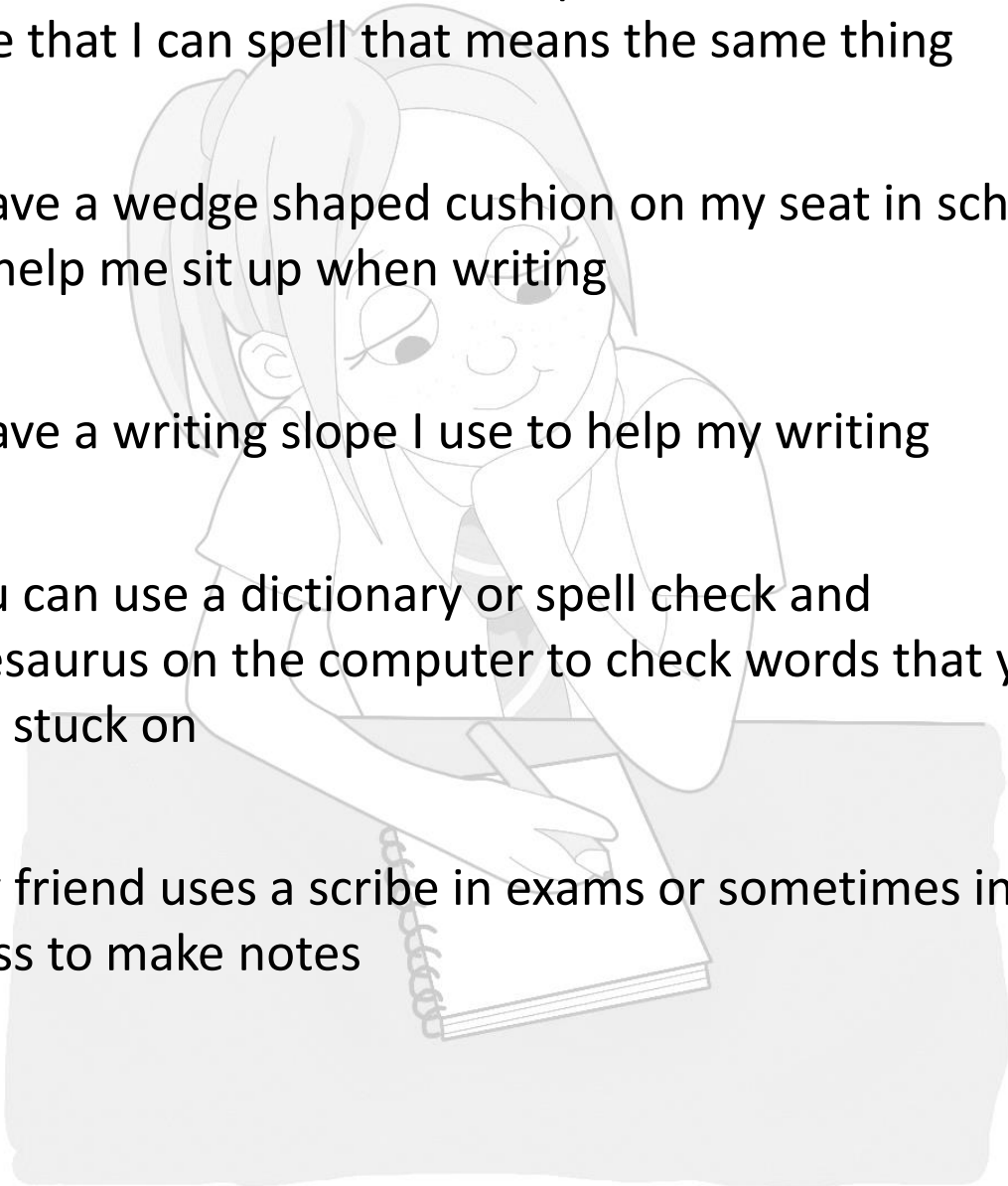


In School - Writing

- ❖ I have a special pen for writing because it is shaped to make it easier to hold and stop my hand aching—‘ergonomically designed’
 - ❖ I use a laptop in class to write long pieces of work
 - ❖ I do my homework on the computer as it helps when I am too tired to write
 - ❖ If I don't know how to spell a word I will ask my teacher to help
 - ❖ I have words I forget how to spell in a word bank (list in a book) that I can use when I am writing
- 
- A faint, light-colored illustration of a young girl with short hair, wearing a school uniform, sitting at a desk and writing in a spiral notebook. She is looking towards the viewer with a slight smile. The illustration is positioned behind the list of tips.

In School - Writing

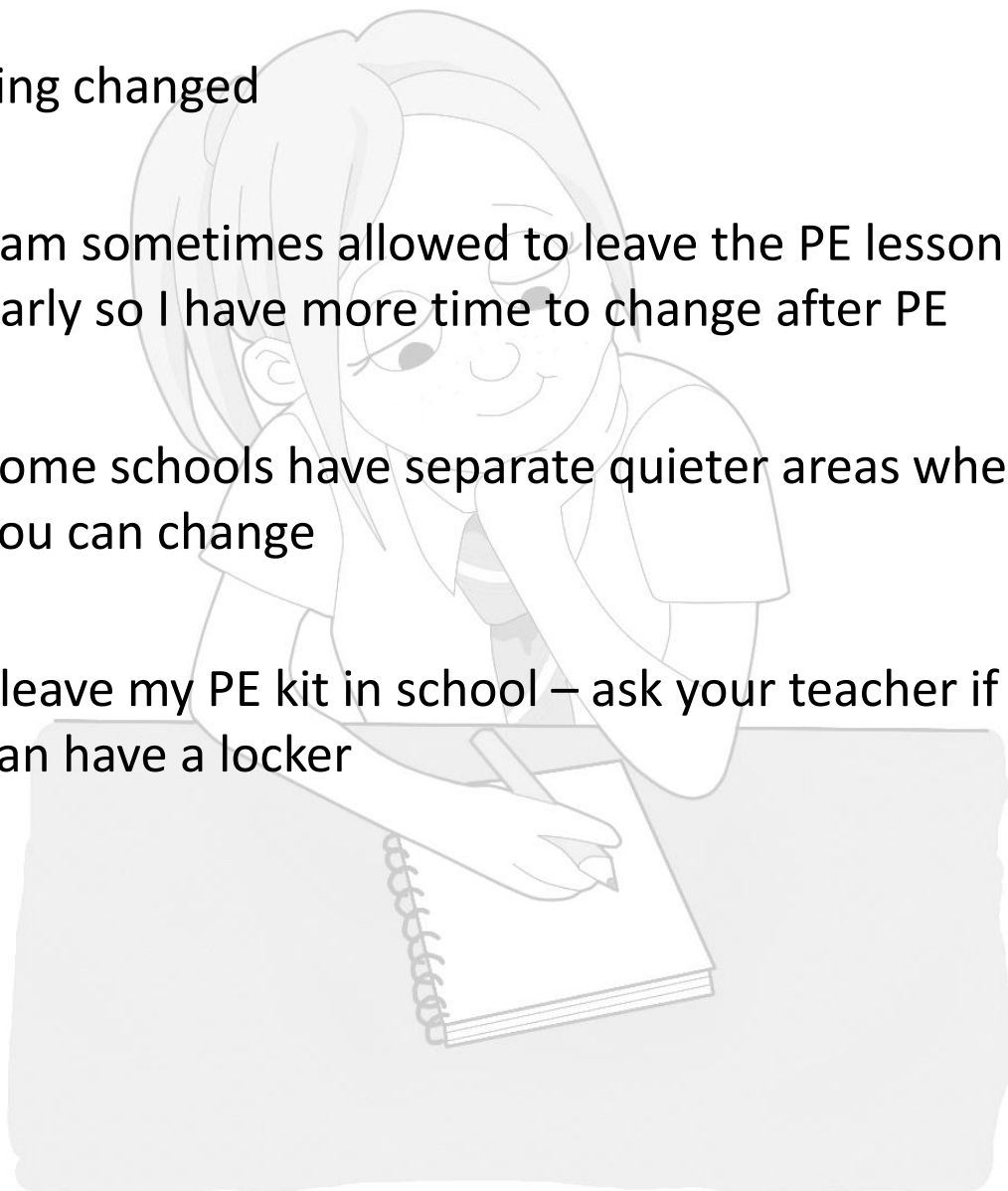
- ❖ If I can't remember how to spell a word, then I find one that I can spell that means the same thing
- ❖ I have a wedge shaped cushion on my seat in school to help me sit up when writing
- ❖ I have a writing slope I use to help my writing
- ❖ You can use a dictionary or spell check and thesaurus on the computer to check words that you get stuck on
- ❖ My friend uses a scribe in exams or sometimes in class to make notes



In School – Physical Education (PE / Games)

Getting changed

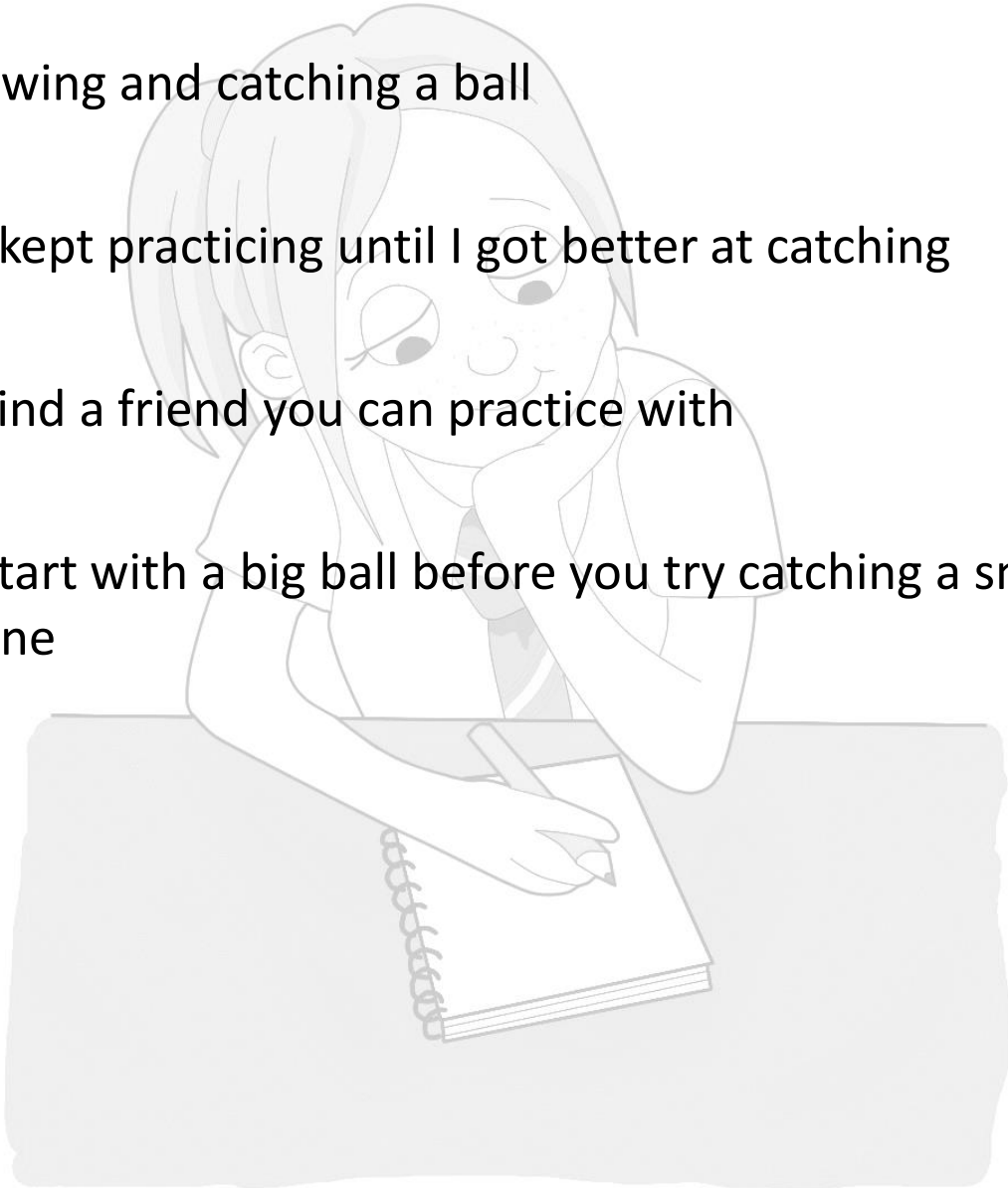
- ❖ I am sometimes allowed to leave the PE lesson early so I have more time to change after PE
- ❖ Some schools have separate quieter areas where you can change
- ❖ I leave my PE kit in school – ask your teacher if you can have a locker



In School – Physical Education (PE / Games)

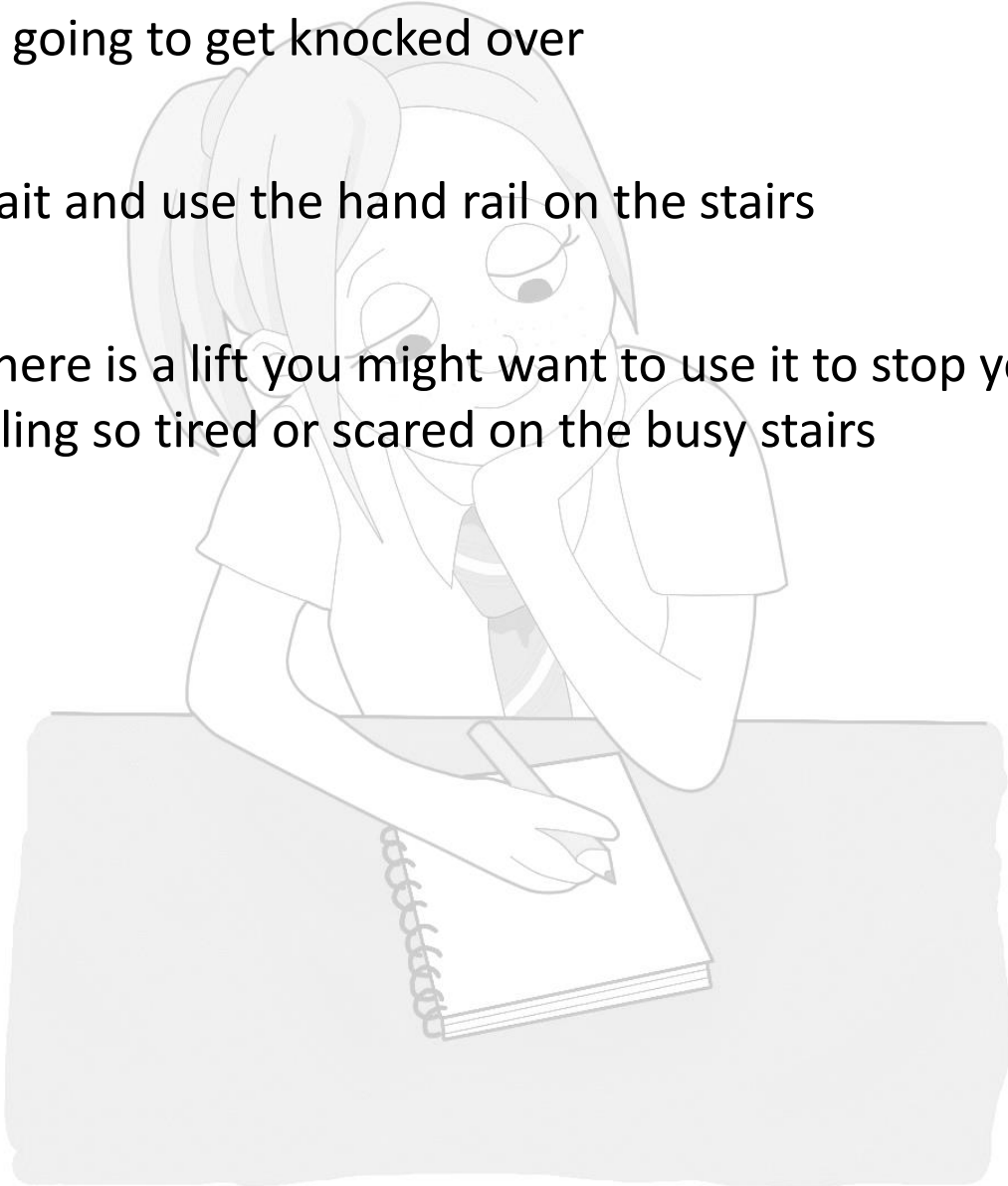
Throwing and catching a ball

- ❖ I kept practicing until I got better at catching
- ❖ Find a friend you can practice with
- ❖ Start with a big ball before you try catching a small one



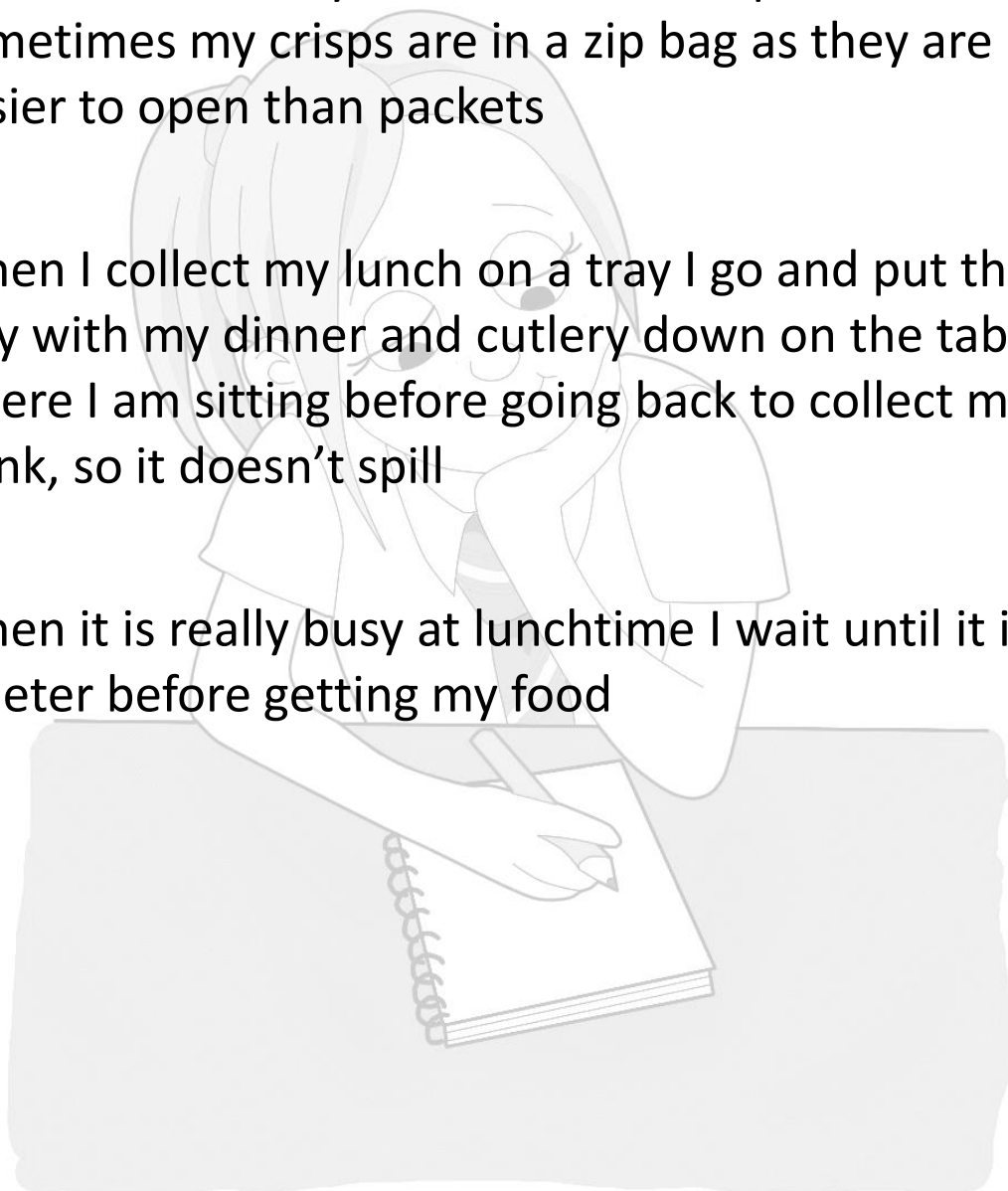
In School – Getting around school

- ❖ I walk near the wall when it is busy so I don't feel like I'm going to get knocked over
- ❖ I wait and use the hand rail on the stairs
- ❖ If there is a lift you might want to use it to stop you feeling so tired or scared on the busy stairs



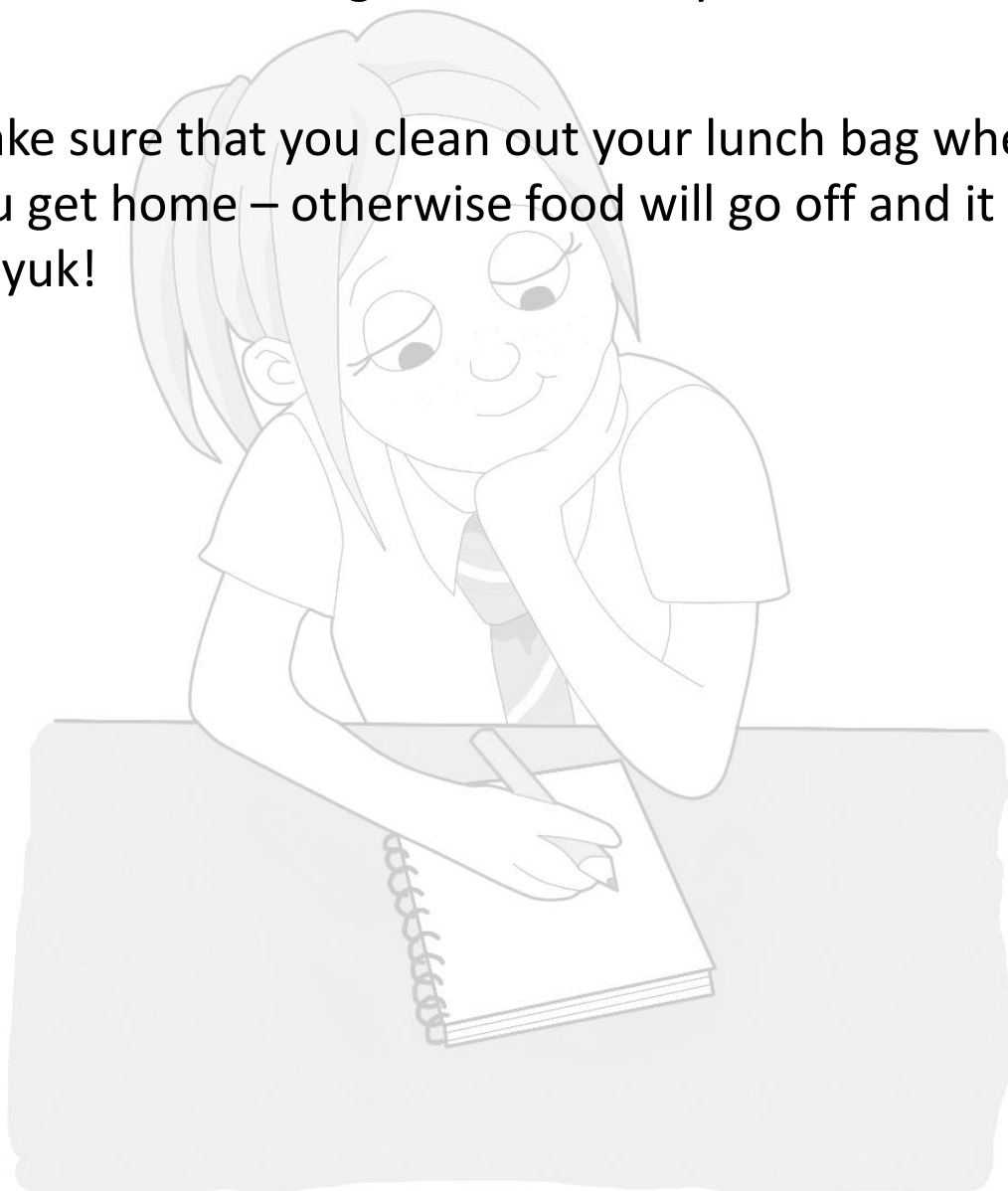
In School – Lunch time

- ❖ I take lunch in easy boxes that I can open and sometimes my crisps are in a zip bag as they are easier to open than packets
- ❖ When I collect my lunch on a tray I go and put the tray with my dinner and cutlery down on the table where I am sitting before going back to collect my drink, so it doesn't spill
- ❖ When it is really busy at lunchtime I wait until it is quieter before getting my food



In School – Lunch time

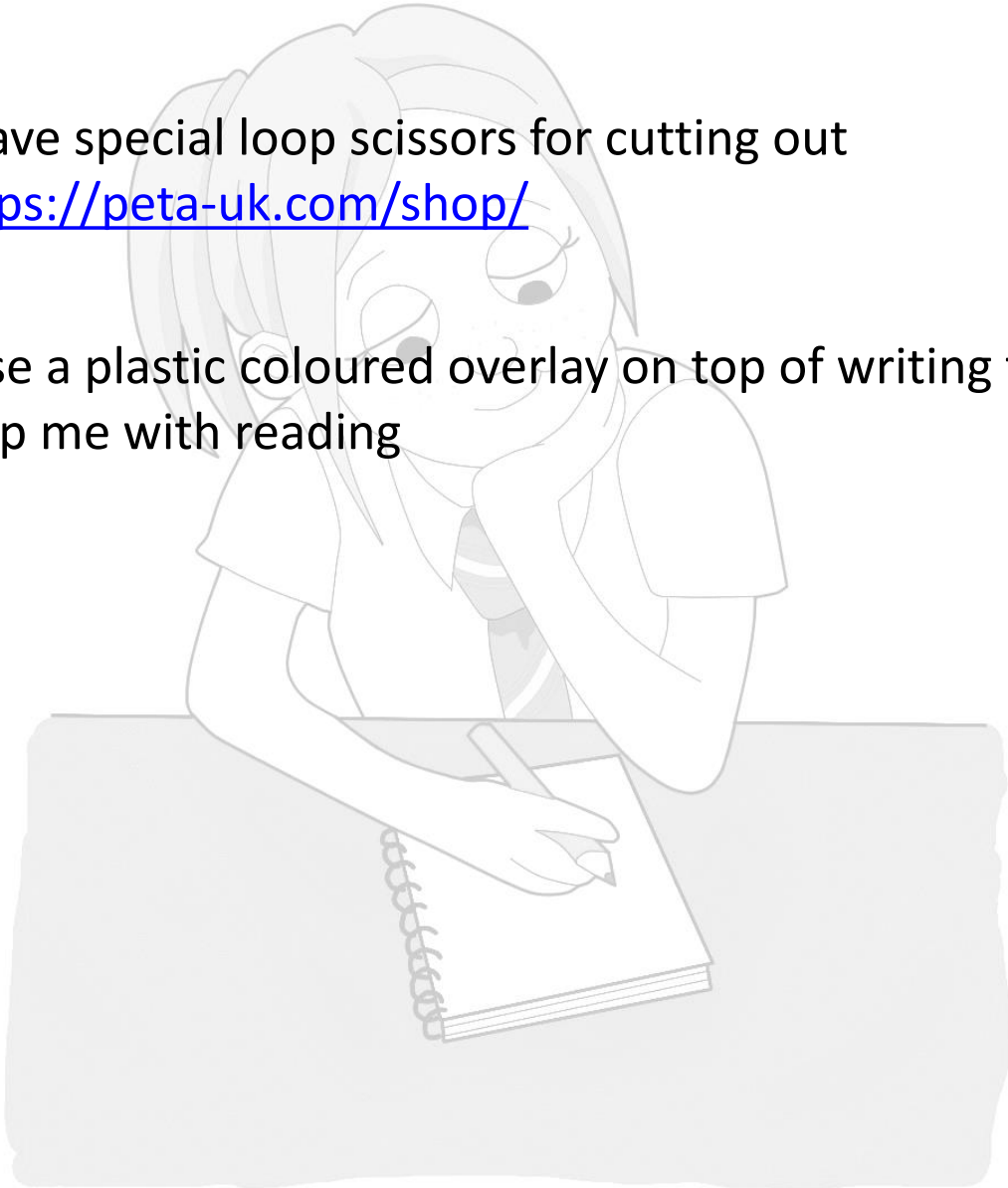
- ❖ My school lets me go to lunch early
- ❖ Make sure that you clean out your lunch bag when you get home – otherwise food will go off and it will be yuk!



In School – Equipment in school

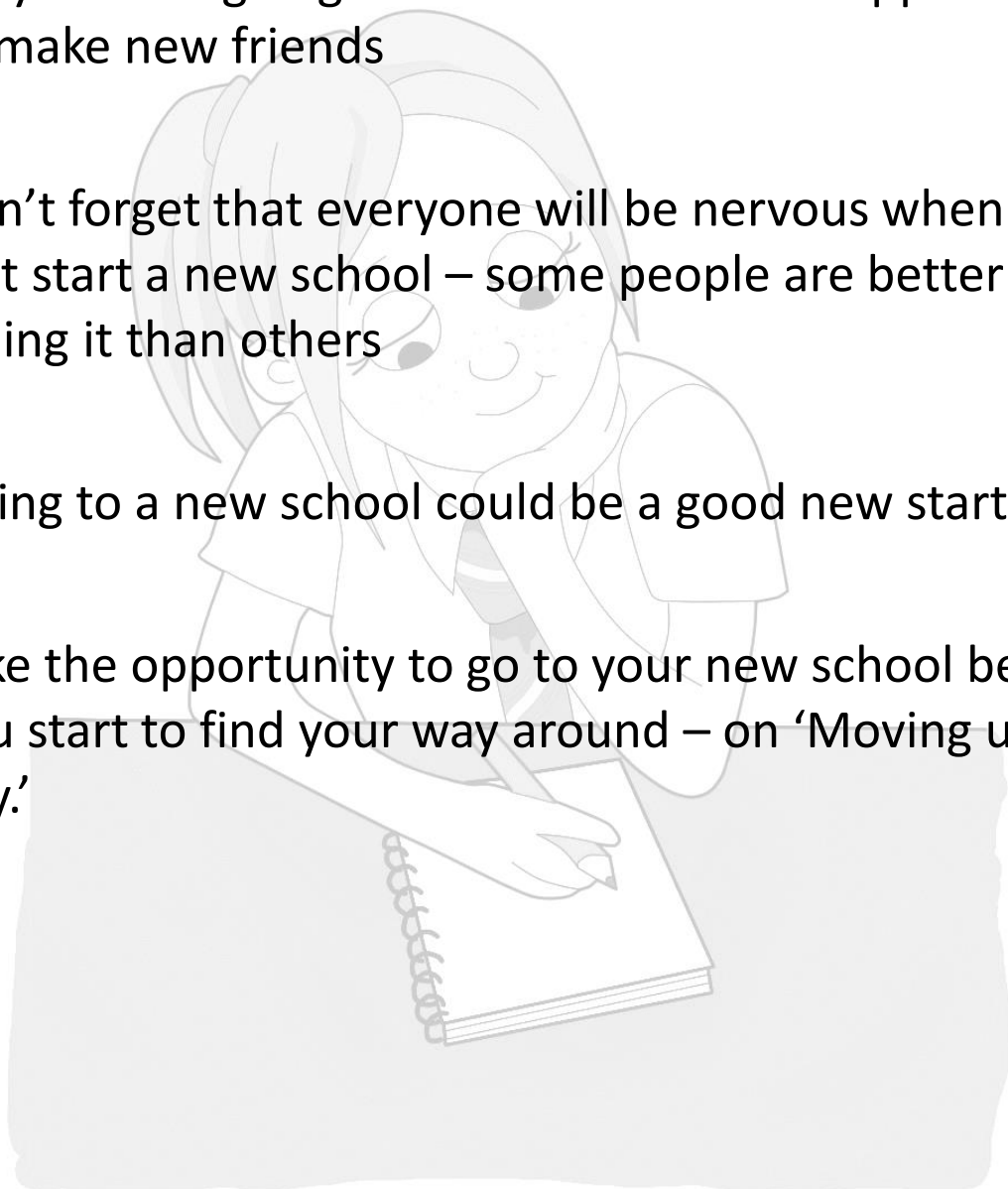
Equipment in school

- ❖ I have special loop scissors for cutting out
<https://peta-uk.com/shop/>
- ❖ I use a plastic coloured overlay on top of writing to help me with reading



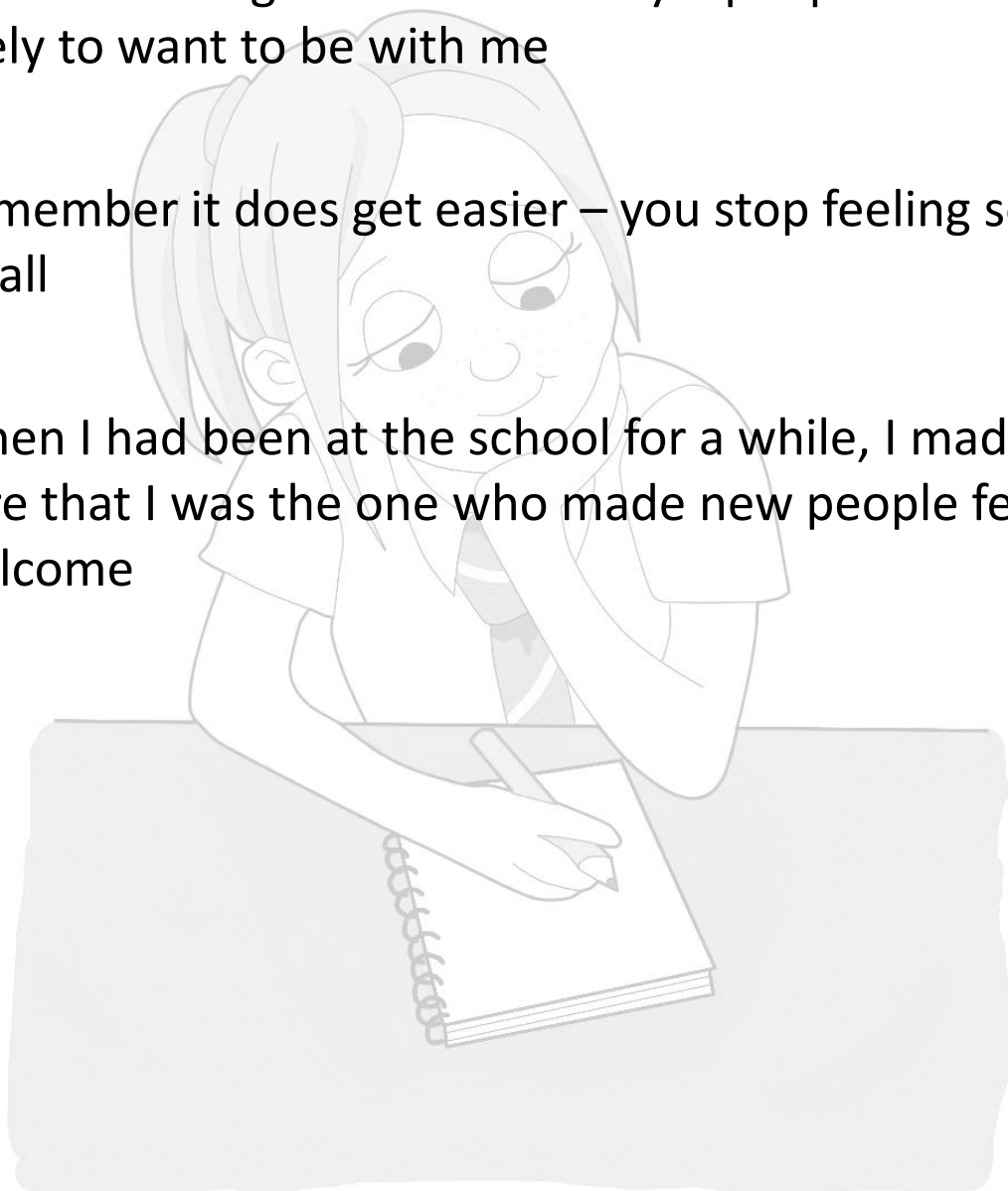
In School – Going to a new school

- ❖ Why not see going to a new school as an opportunity to make new friends
- ❖ Don't forget that everyone will be nervous when you first start a new school – some people are better at hiding it than others
- ❖ Going to a new school could be a good new start
- ❖ Take the opportunity to go to your new school before you start to find your way around – on 'Moving up day.'



In School – Going to a new school

- ❖ I find that it is good to be friendly – people are more likely to want to be with me
- ❖ Remember it does get easier – you stop feeling so small
- ❖ When I had been at the school for a while, I made sure that I was the one who made new people feel welcome

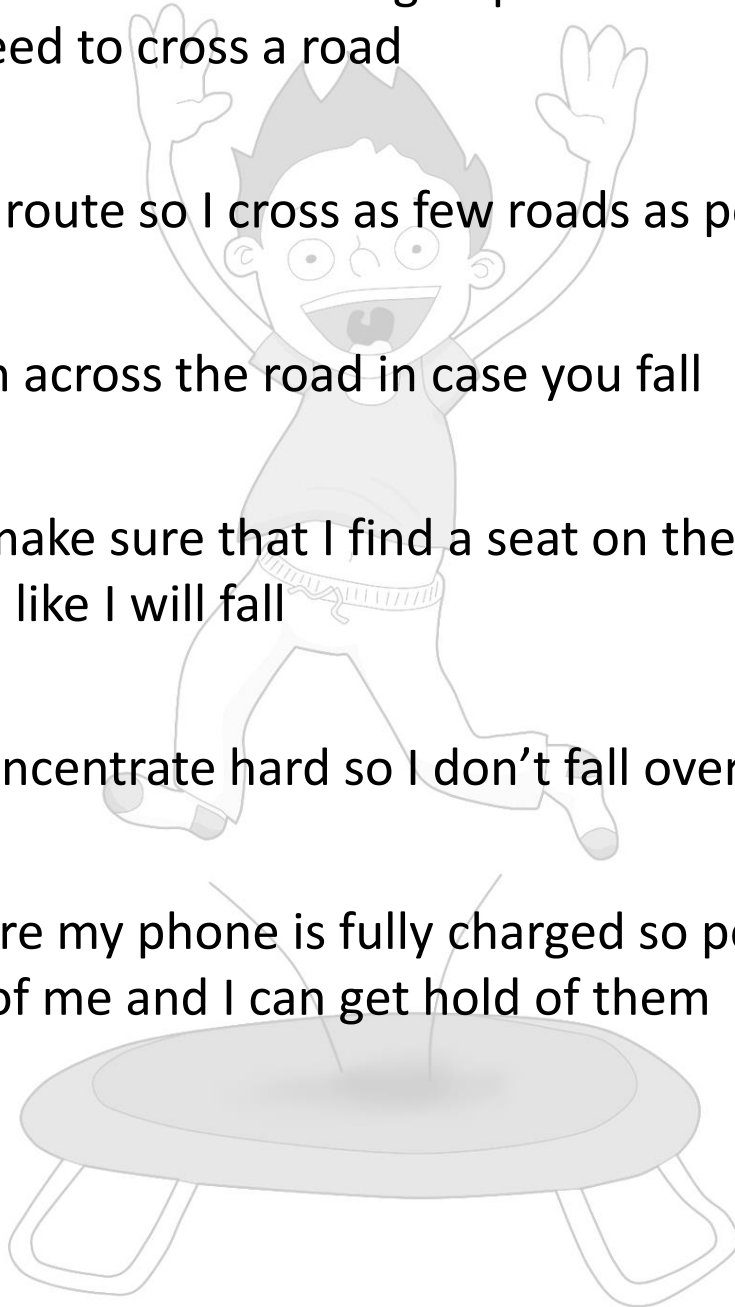


In my spare time



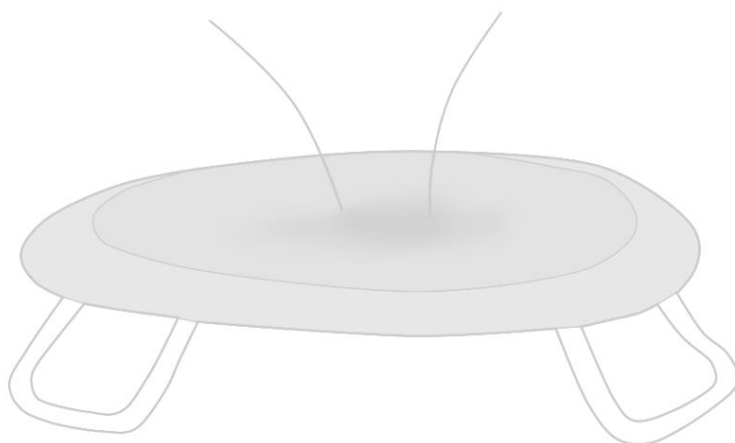
In my spare time - Getting around and about

- ❖ I always use a zebra crossing or pedestrian crossing when I need to cross a road
- ❖ I plan my route so I cross as few roads as possible
- ❖ Never run across the road in case you fall
- ❖ I always make sure that I find a seat on the bus so I don't feel like I will fall
- ❖ I try to concentrate hard so I don't fall over
- ❖ I make sure my phone is fully charged so people can get hold of me and I can get hold of them



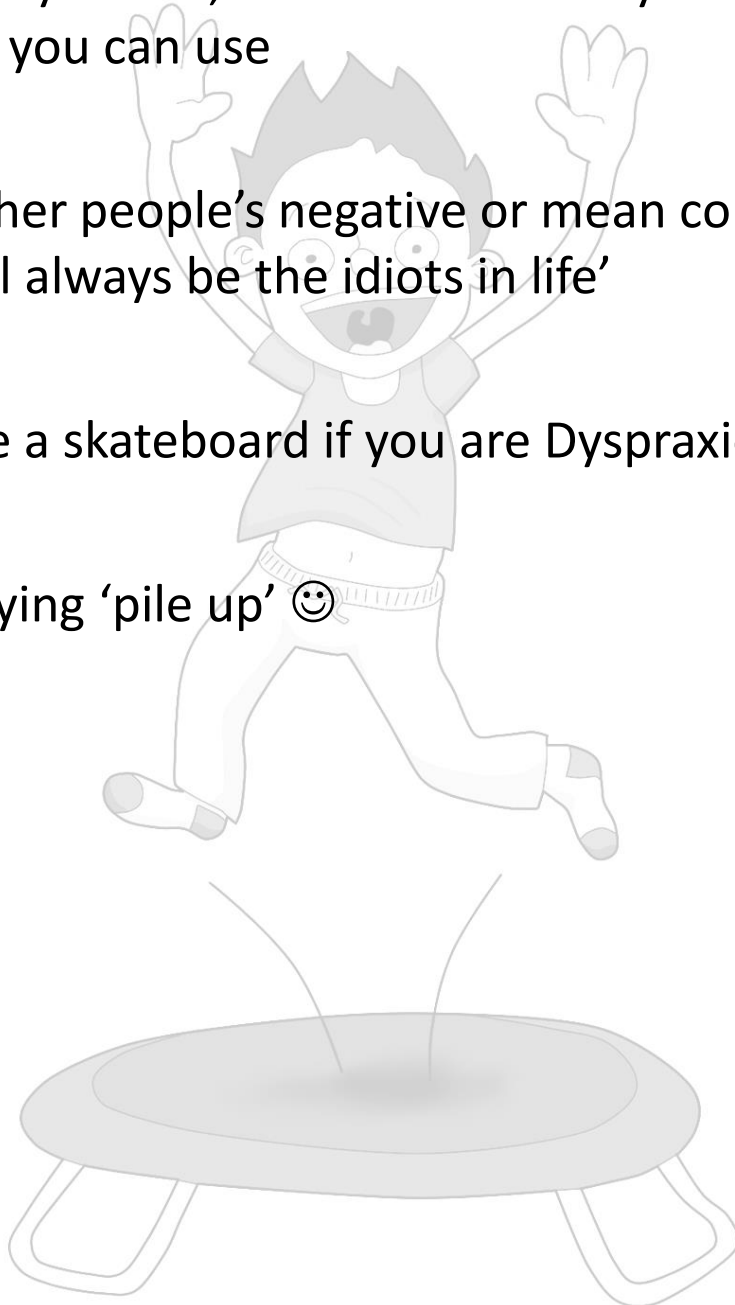
In my spare time - Finding things I like to do

- ❖ I have tried lots of new things until I found something I enjoyed
- ❖ It can be easier to make friends or to talk to new people if you like the same things, so joining clubs in school can be a good way of finding these people
- ❖ Find a friend to go with you to a new club or to try something new
- ❖ Try out all the school clubs until you find something you like doing or people you like to hang out with



In my spare time - Finding things I like to do

- ❖ Try and be yourself, be confident that you have strengths you can use
- ❖ Ignore other people's negative or mean comments – 'there will always be the idiots in life'
- ❖ Never use a skateboard if you are Dyspraxic 😊
- ❖ Avoid playing 'pile up' 😊

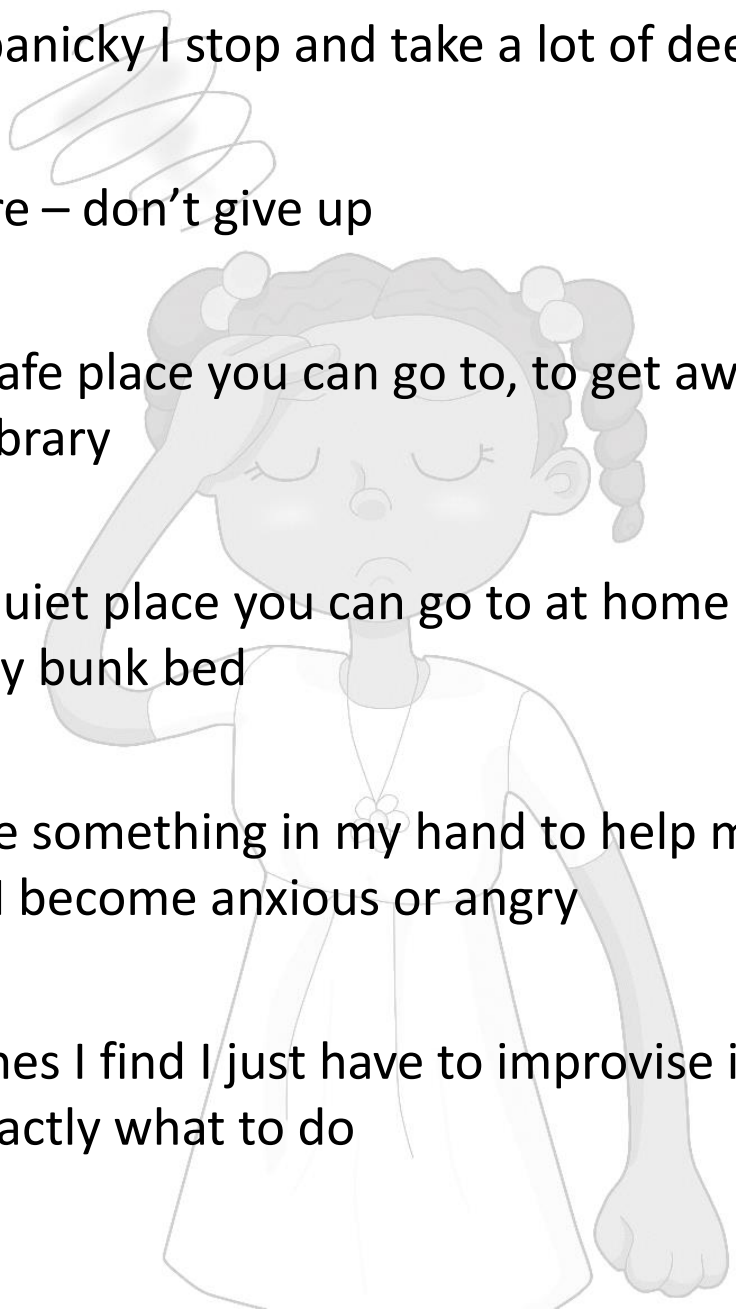


When things are tough

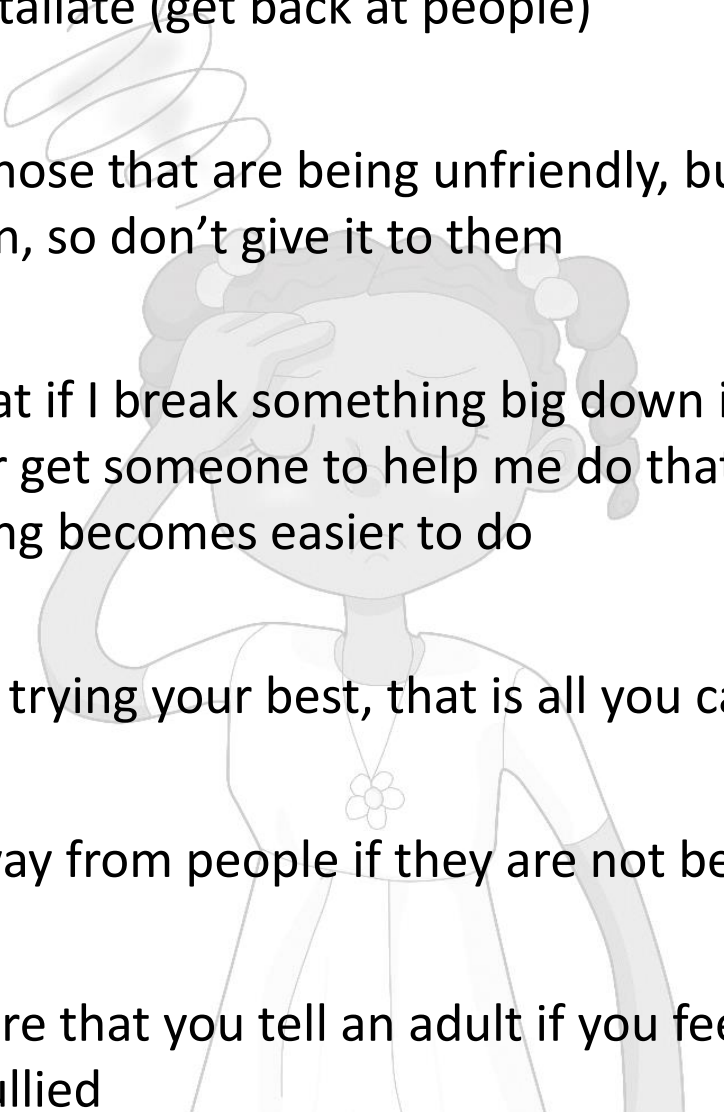


When things are tough

- ❖ If I feel panicky I stop and take a lot of deep breaths
- ❖ Persevere – don't give up
- ❖ Have a safe place you can go to, to get away e.g. the school library
- ❖ Have a quiet place you can go to at home to chill e.g. under my bunk bed
- ❖ I squeeze something in my hand to help me calm down if I become anxious or angry
- ❖ Sometimes I find I just have to improvise if I don't know exactly what to do



When things are tough

- ❖ Don't retaliate (get back at people)
 - ❖ Ignore those that are being unfriendly, bullies like attention, so don't give it to them
 - ❖ I find that if I break something big down into small steps (or get someone to help me do that) then the hard thing becomes easier to do
 - ❖ Keep on trying your best, that is all you can do
 - ❖ Walk away from people if they are not being nice
 - ❖ Make sure that you tell an adult if you feel you are being bullied
- 

When things are tough

- ❖ I get better at things when I have had the chance to practice a lot
- ❖ Sometimes if I act confident I feel more confident



Top Tips and Tricks

We would like to thank the authors of this booklet, who gave up their time to share their expertise and experiences with us. We hope that some of the tips and tricks that these authors have identified as useful for them, will also be useful for you.

List of authors:

Cookie

Gwen

Hester

Ieuan

Joel

Paolo

Pippa



Illustrations by Rian Clarke

This booklet was supported by an award from the Richard Benjamin Trust to Dr Catherine Purcell and Sally Scott-Roberts (2015).

For further information or to request another booklet please contact

Catherine.Purcell@southwales.ac.uk

or

scott-robertsS1@Cardiff.ac.uk