

Don't Worry, Felix

AUTHORS

YOHANN DEVEZY AND KATHERINE ALICE

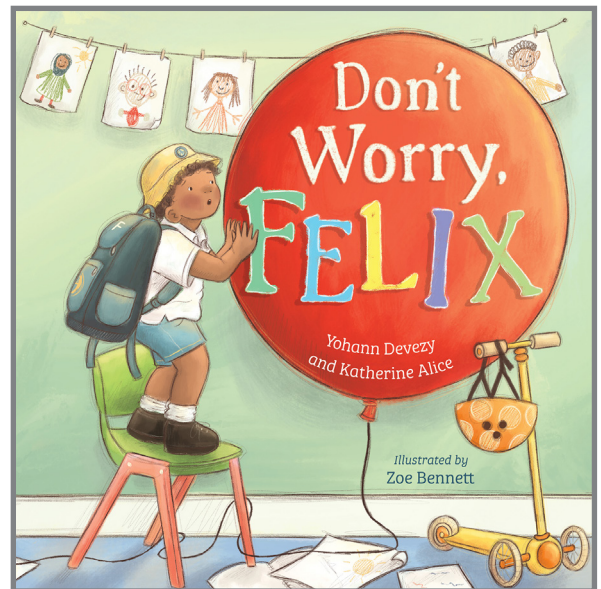
ILLUSTRATOR

ZOE BENNETT

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



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.

Katherine 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. Katherine 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. *Ruby's Repair Cafe*, was selected as a Notable by the CBCA this year.

STUDY NOTES

- Look at the cover of the book together. What do you think the story might be about?
- How did you feel on your first day at school? Excited, nervous, worried, happy, etc. Talk about how people can feel differently about the same situation.
- Describe how you think Felix is feeling.
- What do you think the red balloon represents?
- Have you ever felt your heart thumping, stomach twisting and toes wiggling? In what situation(s)?

- Why does the balloon get bigger?
- What does Felix's dad teach him? Can you try this special trick? How does it make you feel?
- Why does Felix feel anxious again the next day?
- What happens when Felix practises the trick on his own?
- Talk about what happens on the last spread.
- What do you think about the end of the story? What sort of message is being given?
- What did you think of the book? If you liked it, why did you like it? What was your favourite part?
- 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 you feel nervous.
- Talk about what you might be thinking when your body is feeling nervous.
- Practise the following breathing exercises:
 - 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.
 - 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

- Mindful Colouring: Provide colouring sheets with scenes from the book. Encourage children to focus on their breathing and stay present while they colour.
- Body Scan: Guide students through a body scan meditation, helping them notice and relax each part of their body from head to toe.
- Use 'Worry Bubbles': Children can blow bubbles using a bubble wand, imagining their worries floating away with each bubble they blow.
- Breath Relay: Set up a relay race where students must complete a breathing exercise at each station before moving to the next.
- 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.
- 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, 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.

Role-playing

- Anxiety Scenarios: Create scenarios where students might feel anxious (eg. taking a test, meeting new people, etc.). Role-play these situations and practise the breathing techniques from the book or teaching notes to manage anxiety.
- Breathing Buddies: Pair students up and have them practise teaching each other the breathing techniques.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Have students create a journal where they can draw or write about how they feel before and after practising breathing techniques.
- Ask students to write their own short stories or draw comics about a character who uses breathing techniques to overcome anxiety.
- Create a chart with different emotions. Have students place stickers or draw faces to show how they feel before and after breathing exercises.
- 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.

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

DON'T WORRY, FELIX

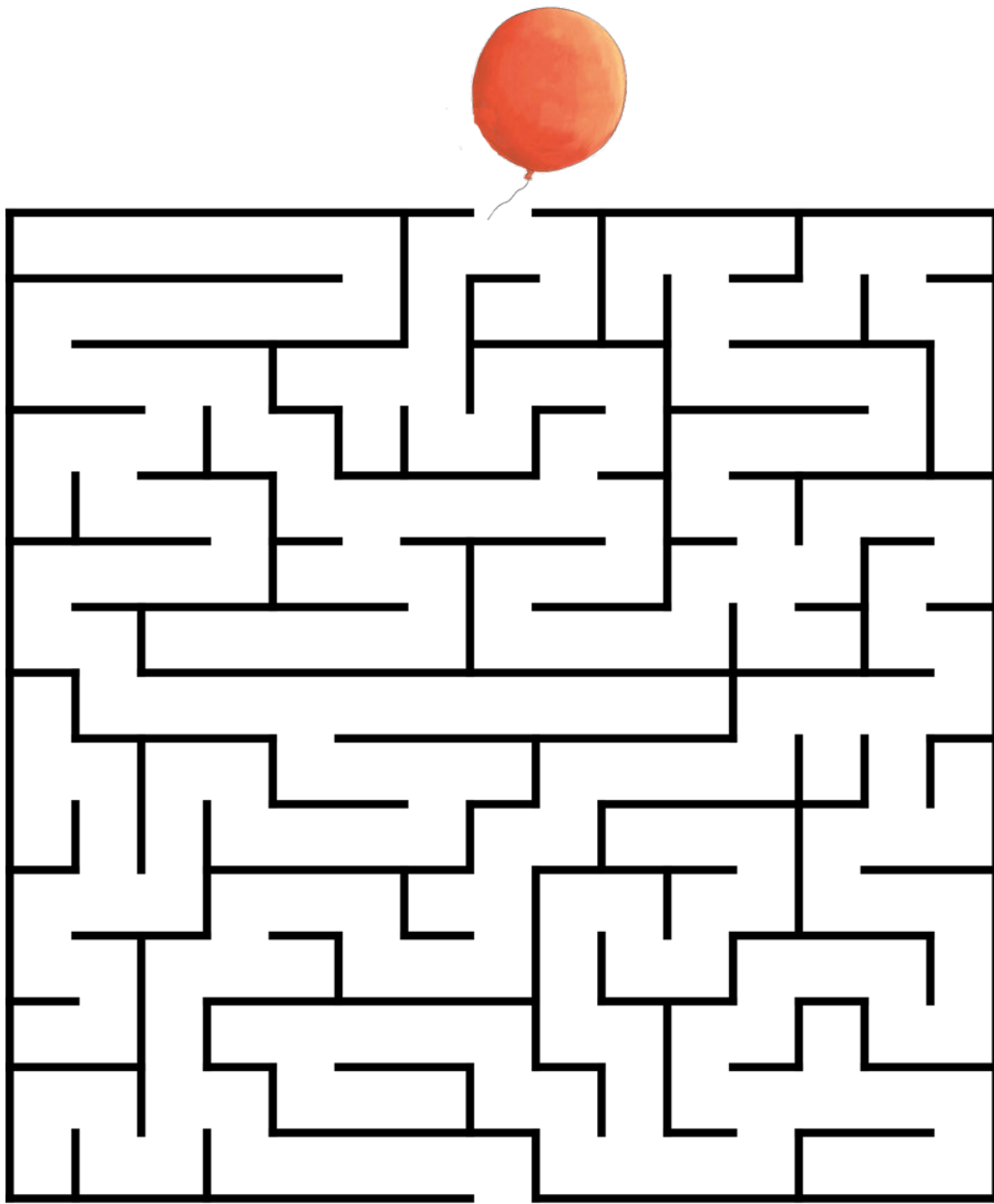
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 G U H A P P Y A S

ANXIETY
 BALLOON
 CALM
 CLASS
 FAMILY

FELIX
 FRIENDS
 HAPPY
 HUG
 RED

SCARED
 SCHOOL
 SOLUTION
 TRICK
 WORRY

- Can you help Felix walk away from his red balloon?



- 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 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

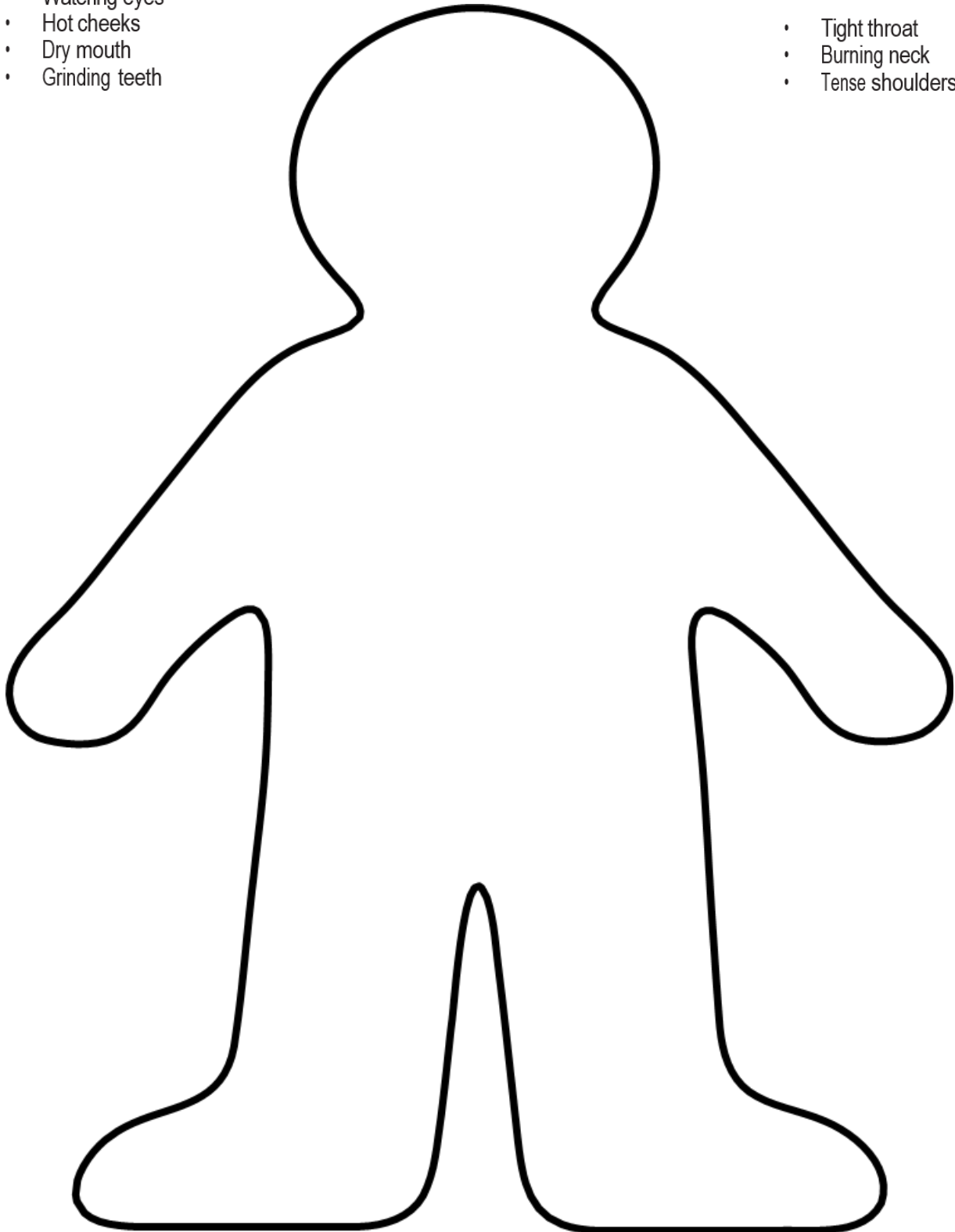
- Thumping heart
- Chest pain
- Fast breathing
- Stomach twisting or churning

Legs & Feet

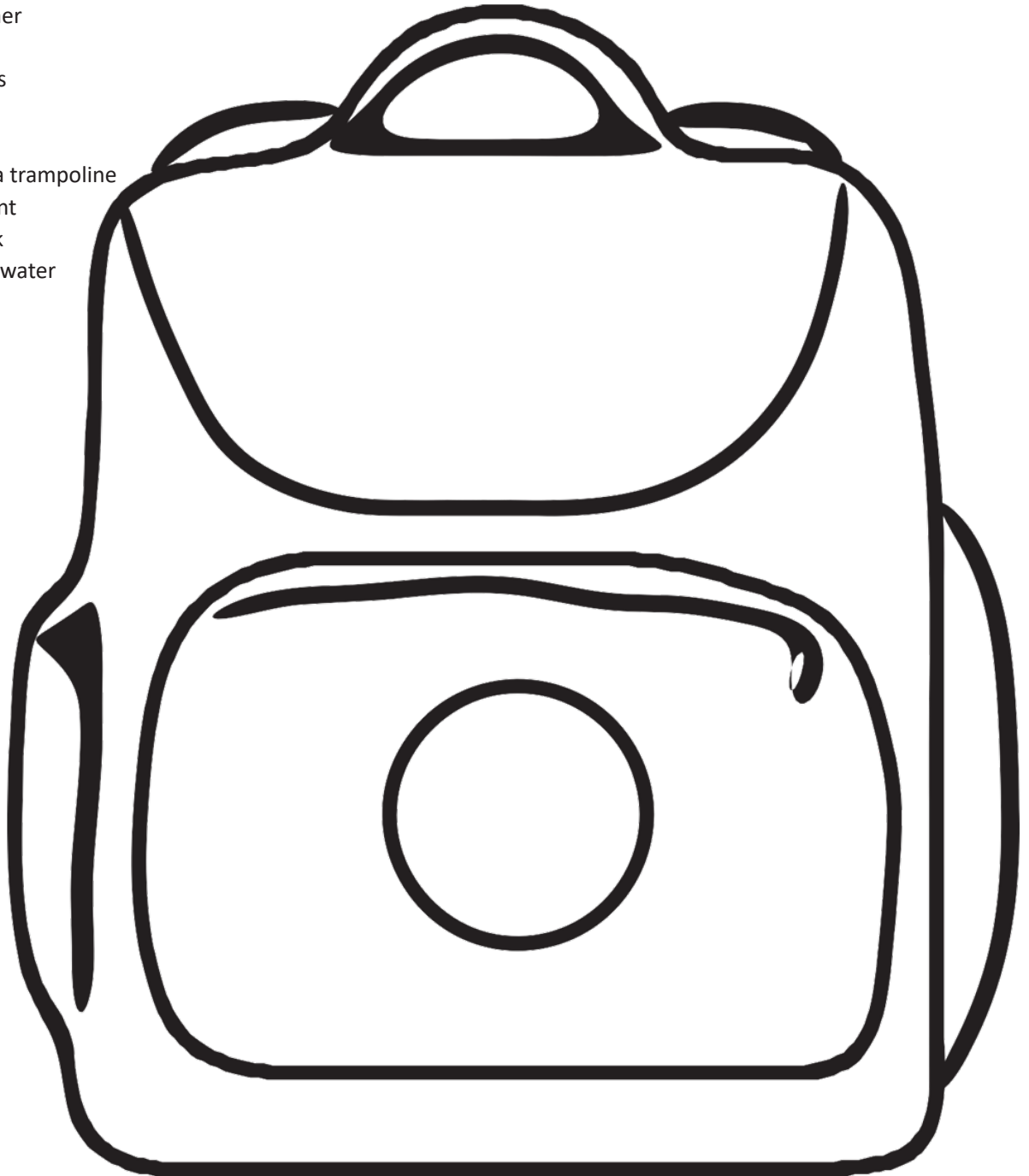
- Shaking legs
- Tense legs
- Toes wiggling

Neck & Shoulders

- Tight throat
- Burning neck
- Tense shoulders



- Think about some different strategies or tools that may help you when you are feeling nervous. Add these to the backpack below to create your own calming backpack. You can use the words below to help you or come up with your own ideas!
 - Breathing activity
 - Listen to music
 - Go somewhere dark
 - Go somewhere quiet
 - Hug from a parent/friend/pet
 - Talk to someone about how you feel
 - Squeeze a stress ball/sensory toy
 - Fidget spinner
 - Ride a bike
 - Headphones
 - Dance
 - Kick a ball
 - Bounce on a trampoline
 - Draw or paint
 - Read a book
 - Drink some water



ANSWERS

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	D
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

