

# POSS'S SCHOOL DAYS

*An activity based story book for young children*

Written by Anne Little

Illustrated by Denise McMahon

## A NOTE TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

“Poss's School Days” is an activity based picture storybook which focuses on epilepsy. It aims to increase student knowledge of epilepsy; encourage appropriate responses to seizures and to foster a caring and accepting attitude which will reduce the stigma associated with the condition.

The book provides information about epilepsy and its management in an entertaining and informative way. It is an easy to read, bright and colourful resource for use with children between 4 and 8 years of age.

The book has been designed to encourage the reader to actively participate in the story telling. The story is accompanied by three activity worksheets which are provided at the end of the book.

“Poss's School Days” is the second in a series of books which focus on epilepsy. The first book “And Down Went Poss” examines the feelings experienced by Little Poss when he is diagnosed with epilepsy. Both books are an excellent way to introduce children to the topic of epilepsy.

It is interesting to note that epilepsy is a condition which affects animals, as well as human beings. Dogs, cats, seals and possums are a few of the animals known to have epilepsy.

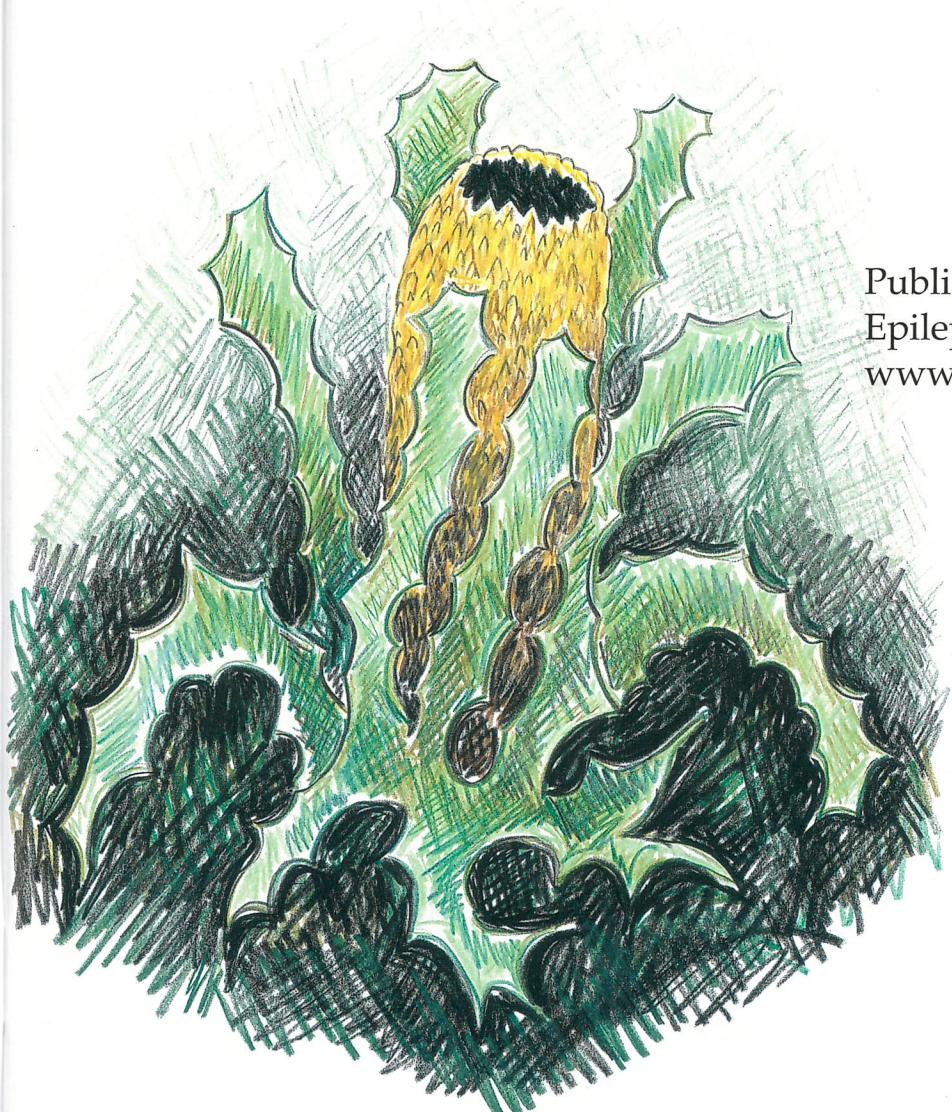
## POSTSCRIPT

The female red kangaroo is sometimes called the Blue Doe or Blue Flyer as she is a grey blue in colour, not red like the male kangaroo.

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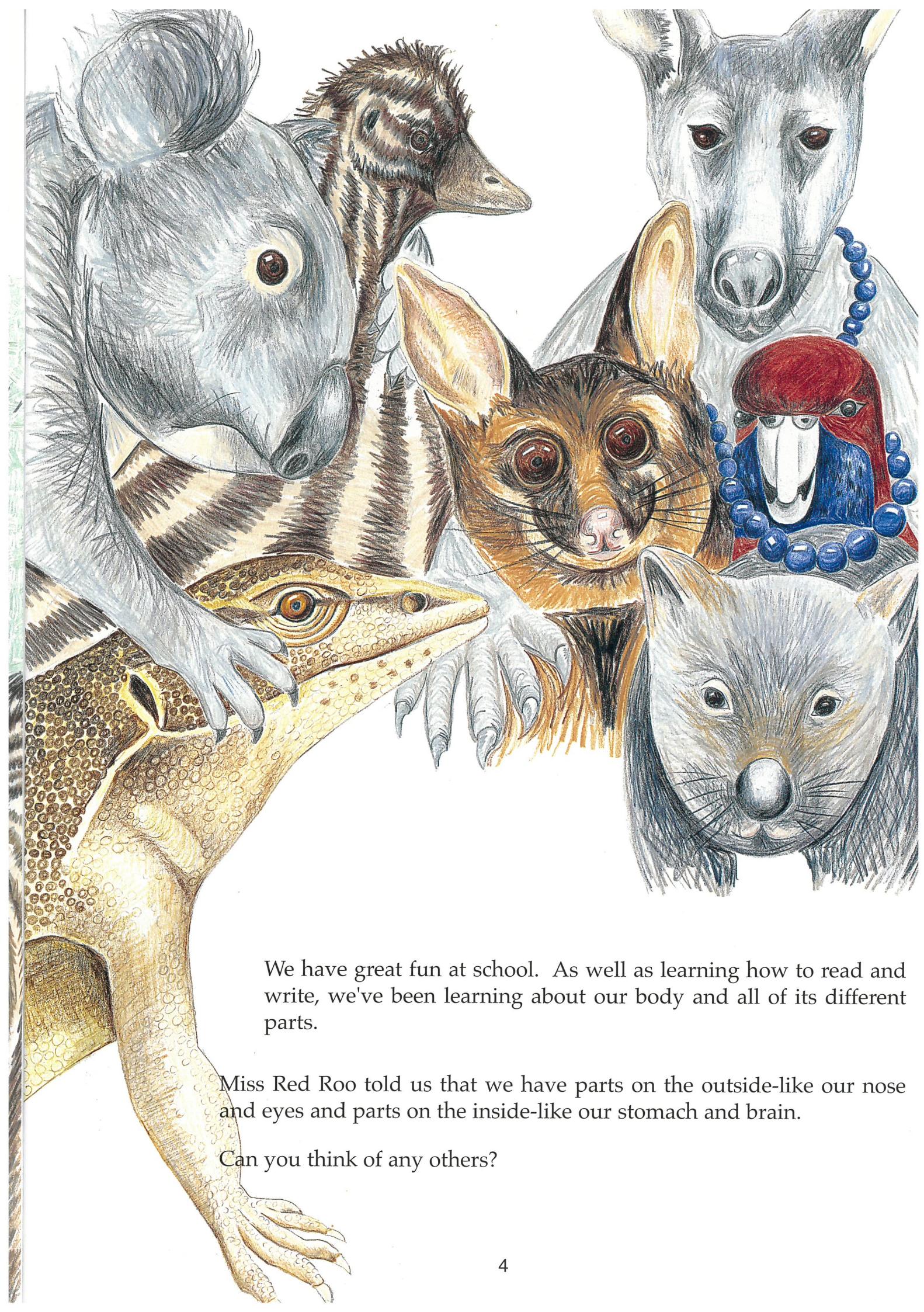
Hello, I'm Little Poss. I live in a place called Ningaloo, in a tall, tall gum tree. It's a beautiful place to live. Just have a look....There are lots of strong tall gum trees, a sparkling creek, brightly coloured wildflowers and over there in the distance is my school.



I started school this year and I love it. I'm in Year One just like you.  
Come and have a look at our school in Ningaloo.



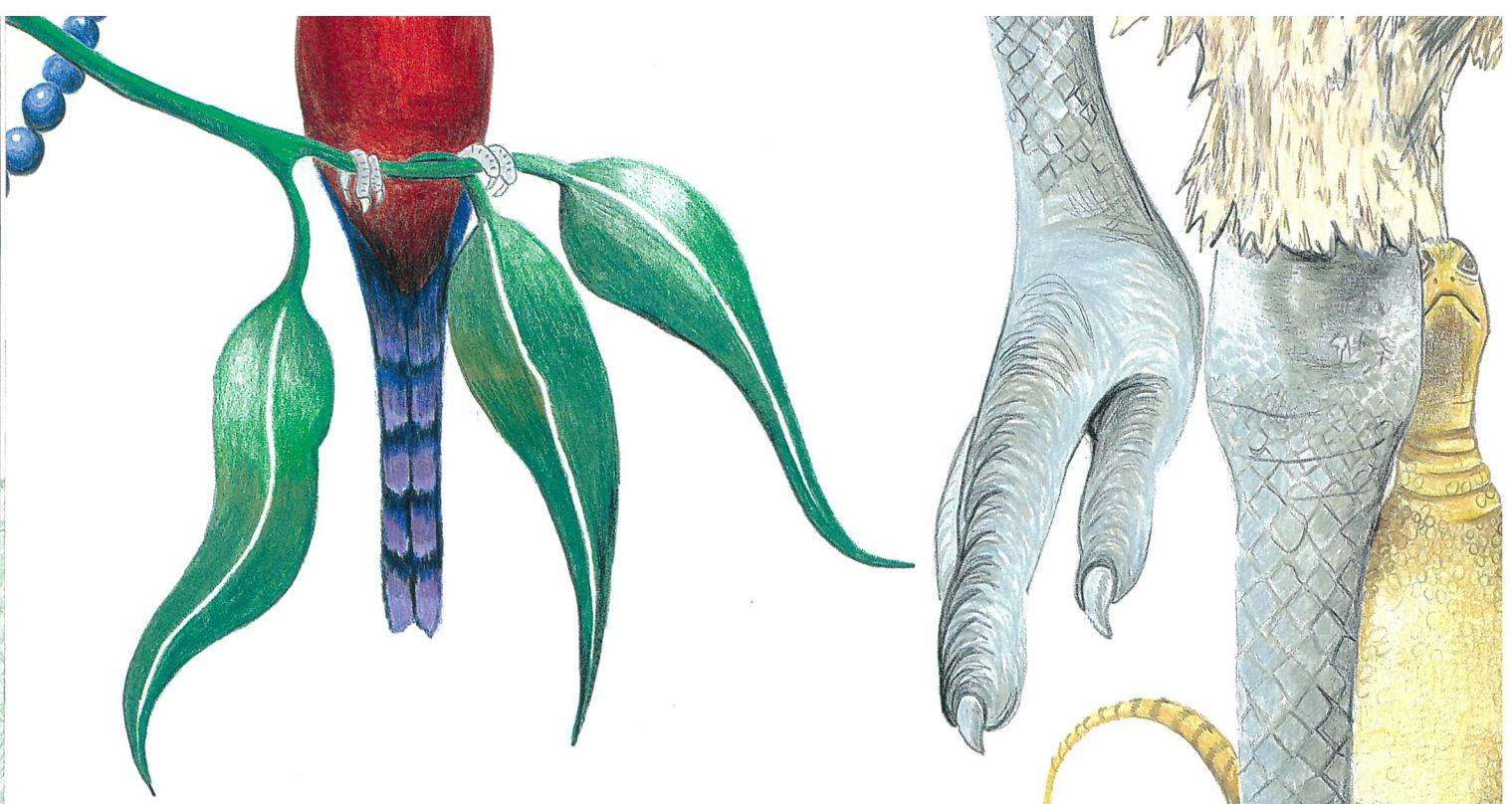
That's Miss Red Roo....She's my teacher, and here are all my friends.  
There's Kerry Koala, Eddie Emu, Ruby Rosella, Wally Wombat and Gertie Goanna.



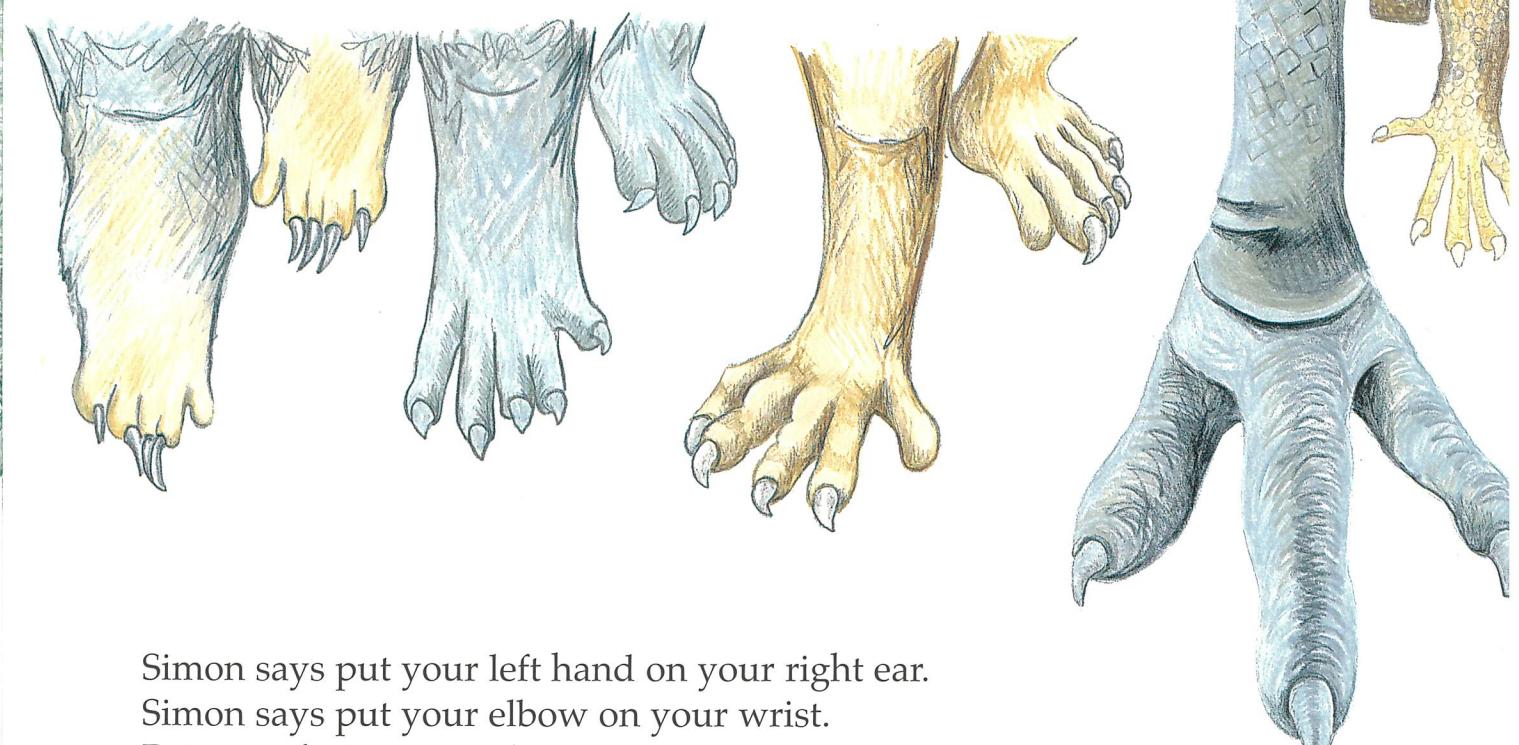
We have great fun at school. As well as learning how to read and write, we've been learning about our body and all of its different parts.

Miss Red Roo told us that we have parts on the outside-like our nose and eyes and parts on the inside-like our stomach and brain.

Can you think of any others?



Eddie Emu suggested that we play a game of Simon Says to see if we knew all our outside body parts. You can play too. Ready? Simon says put your hand on your nose.



Simon says put your left hand on your right ear.  
Simon says put your elbow on your wrist.  
Put your foot on your knee.  
Did you get caught? Ruby Rosella did.

Wally Wombat brought a book about the body to school for Show and Tell. It had pictures of all the body parts on the inside of our body. Wally showed us a picture of the brain. He told us that the brain is like a computer, it controls everything that our body does. Imagine that - our very own computer, locked safely away behind a wall of bone - our skull.



The brain is just one of the parts on the inside of the body. Some of the others are our lungs which help us breathe, our heart which pumps our blood and our stomach which breaks down food.



Do you know where these parts belong inside your body?

After we learnt where the inside body parts belonged.

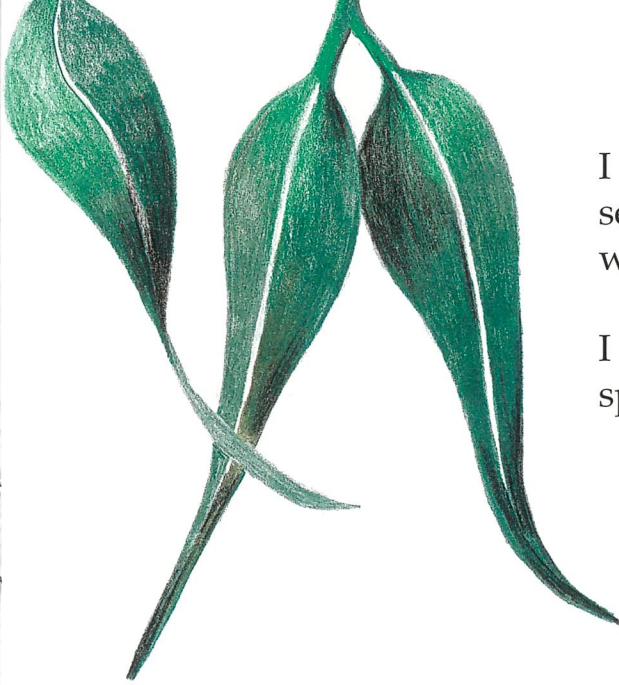
Miss Red Roo traced around the outline of Kerry Koala's body. She pinned this to the wall and we played Pin the Brain on Kerry Koala.



We had a lot of fun especially when Eddie Emu tried to pin the brain to Miss Red Roo's tail. Why don't you play this game with your classmates?



Sometimes our body parts don't work properly. Gertie Goanna sometimes has trouble breathing. Her windpipe starts to close up when she does a lot of running. That's called asthma.

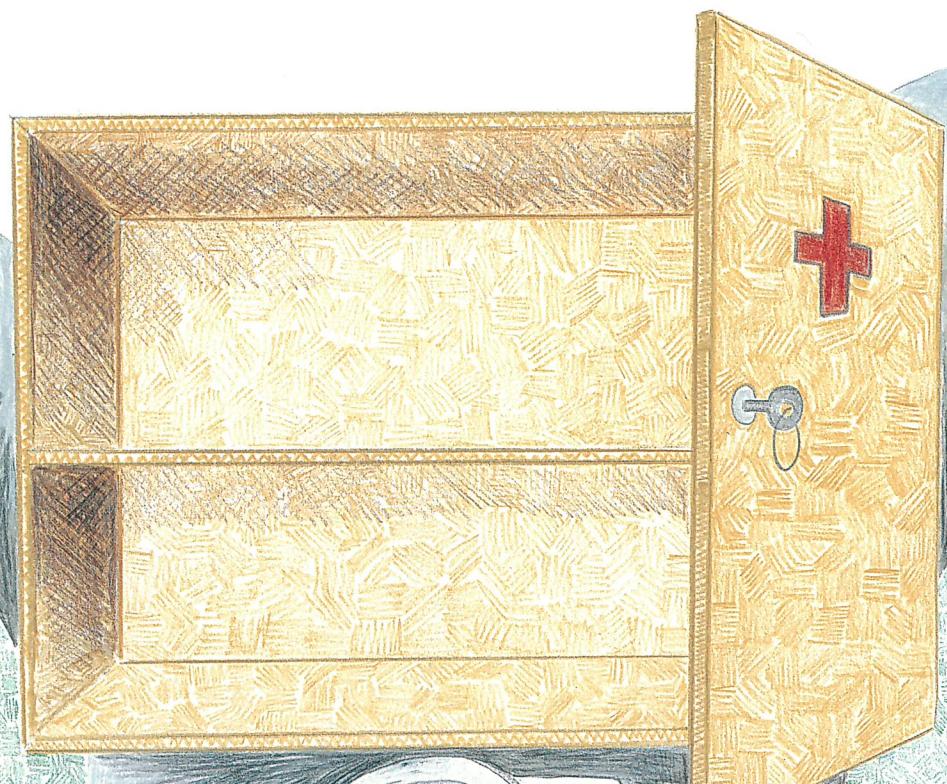


I have epilepsy which means that sometimes my brain sends out mixed messages. When that happens I go wobbly and shake all over.

I have medicine to help my epilepsy and Gertie has a spray to help her asthma.



My medicine has to be kept in a special cabinet. Do you know why medicine must be kept in a special place? Help me find the things that belong in the medicine cabinet.





When I first started school, I didn't want anyone to know that I had epilepsy. I was worried that no one would want to be friends with me. Then, it happened -- the thing that I'd been dreading. I started to go wobbly and I began to shake all over.



My friends didn't know what had happened. But they quickly sprang into action. Ruby Rosella flew off to get Miss Red Roo. Eddie Emu cleared the ground of hard, sharp objects and, Gertie Goanna ran and got a towel to put under my head. When I stopped shaking, Miss Red Roo turned me on my side.





Can you remember what to do if someone you know goes wobbly and shakes all over?



Miss Red Roo said that I was a silly possum for not telling my friends about my epilepsy. She was right...My friends were glad that they knew. If it happens again they won't be worried, because they'll know what to do and so do you.

So remember, don't be a silly possum. If you have falling and shaking seizures let your friends know, so that they know what to do to help. And if you ever see anyone have a falling and shaking seizure, just remember me and my friends at Ningaloo and how they helped me by following these simple steps.

NINGALOO

## The Brain

The brain is like a computer, it controls everything that our body does. It is locked safely away behind a wall of bone - our skull.

The brain is just one of the parts of the inside of the body. Some of the other parts are our lungs, which help us to breath, our heart which pumps our blood and our stomach which break down the food.





Moving things out of the way.

Telling other children not to be afraid.

Sending someone to get a grown up.

Putting something soft under my head and turning  
me on my side.

Being a friend when I wake up.

That's all you have to do, and that's all your friends  
have to do if you have this kind of seizure.

# THINGS TO DO

1. Distribute worksheet 1. Children cut out each of the body parts and paste them in the correct place on the body shape. Identify each of the major body organs and name their functions. Discuss with the class, things they can do to keep the outside of their body healthy such as washing their skin and cleaning their teeth. Discuss the things they can do to keep the inside of their body healthy such as eating healthy food, exercising and wearing a bicycle helmet.

2. Discuss:

- do you have a medicine cabinet at home?
- what kinds of things are kept in it?
- can you reach the cabinet?
- should you take anything out of the cabinet? Why/why not?

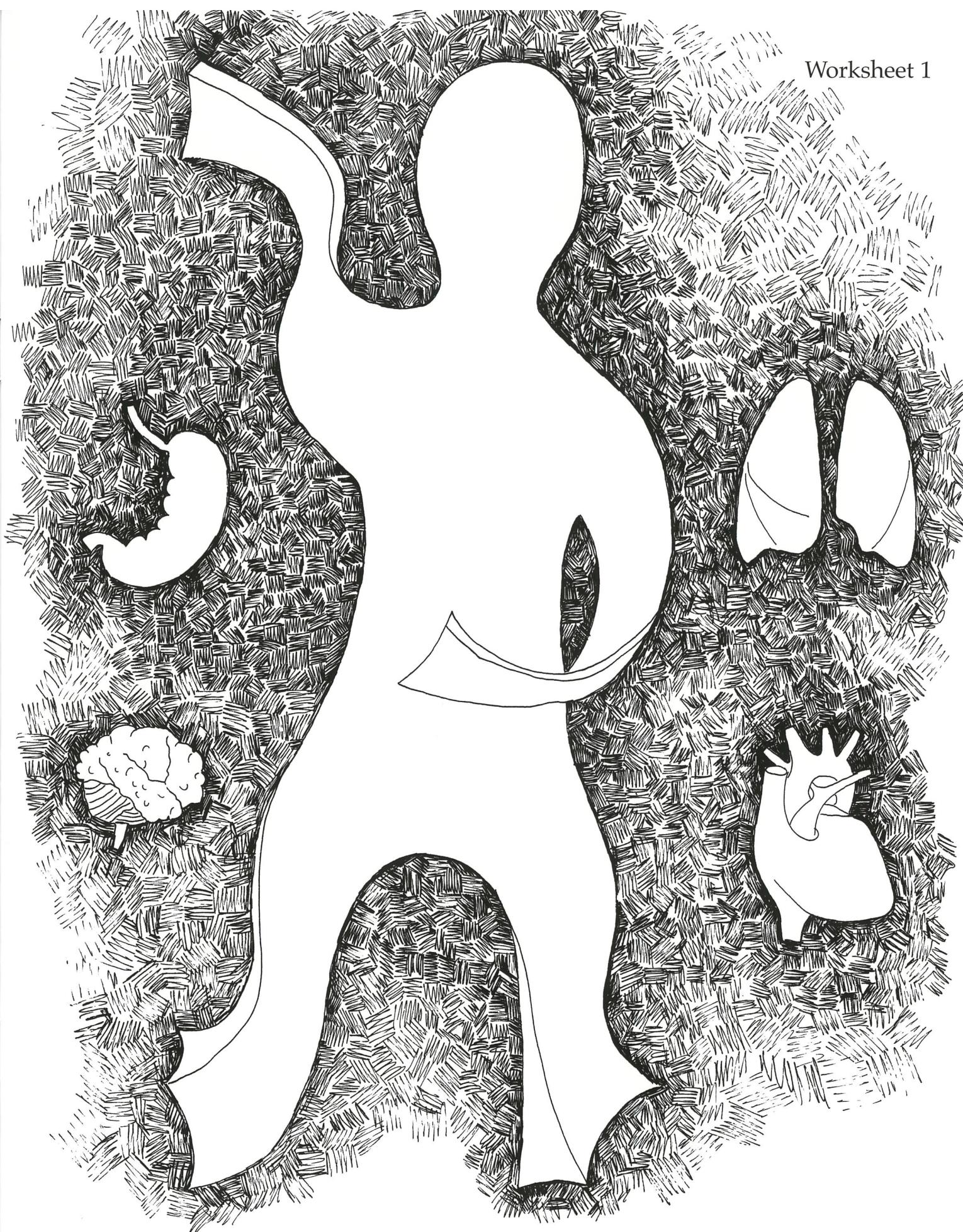
Form generalizations about medication such as never taking anyone else's medicine, taking medicine under the supervision of parents or a responsible adult and taking it as directed by the doctor or pharmacist.

Distribute Worksheet 2. Cut out the things that belong in the medicine cabinet and glue them inside.

3. Revise the ways in which the children can help someone who is having a falling and shaking (tonic-clonic) seizure. These include:

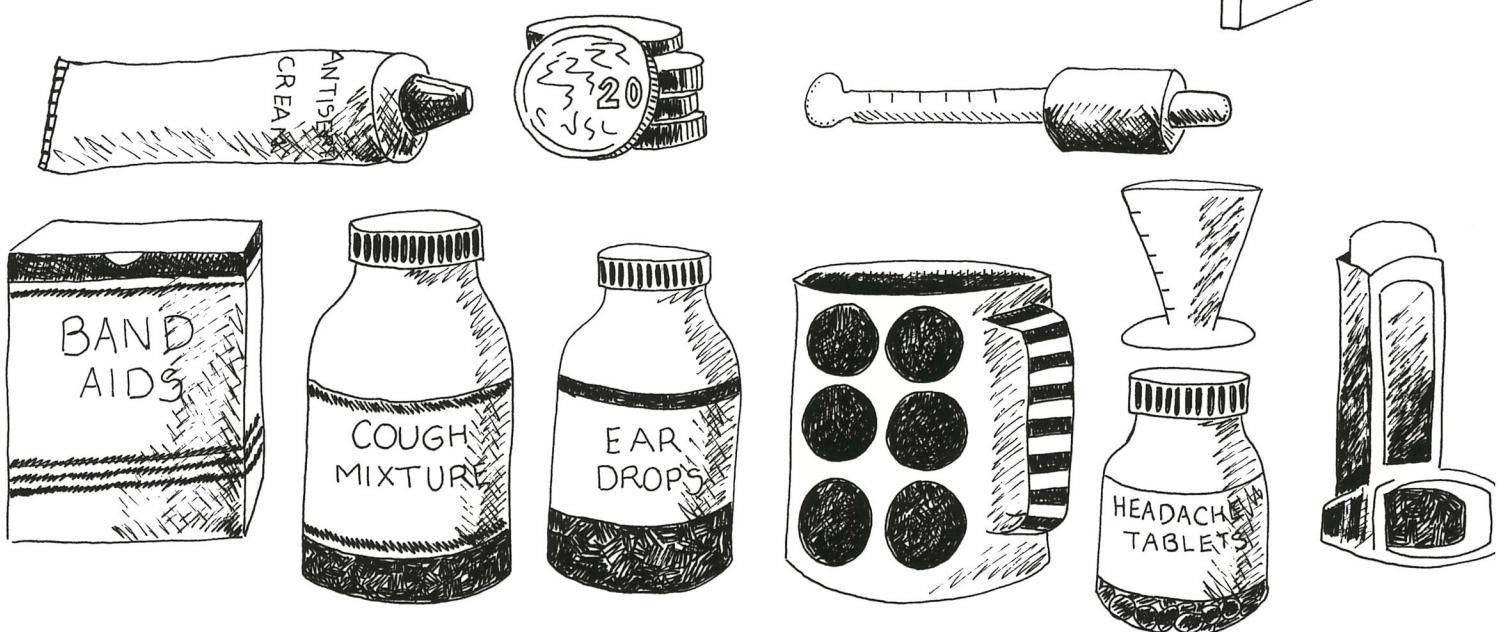
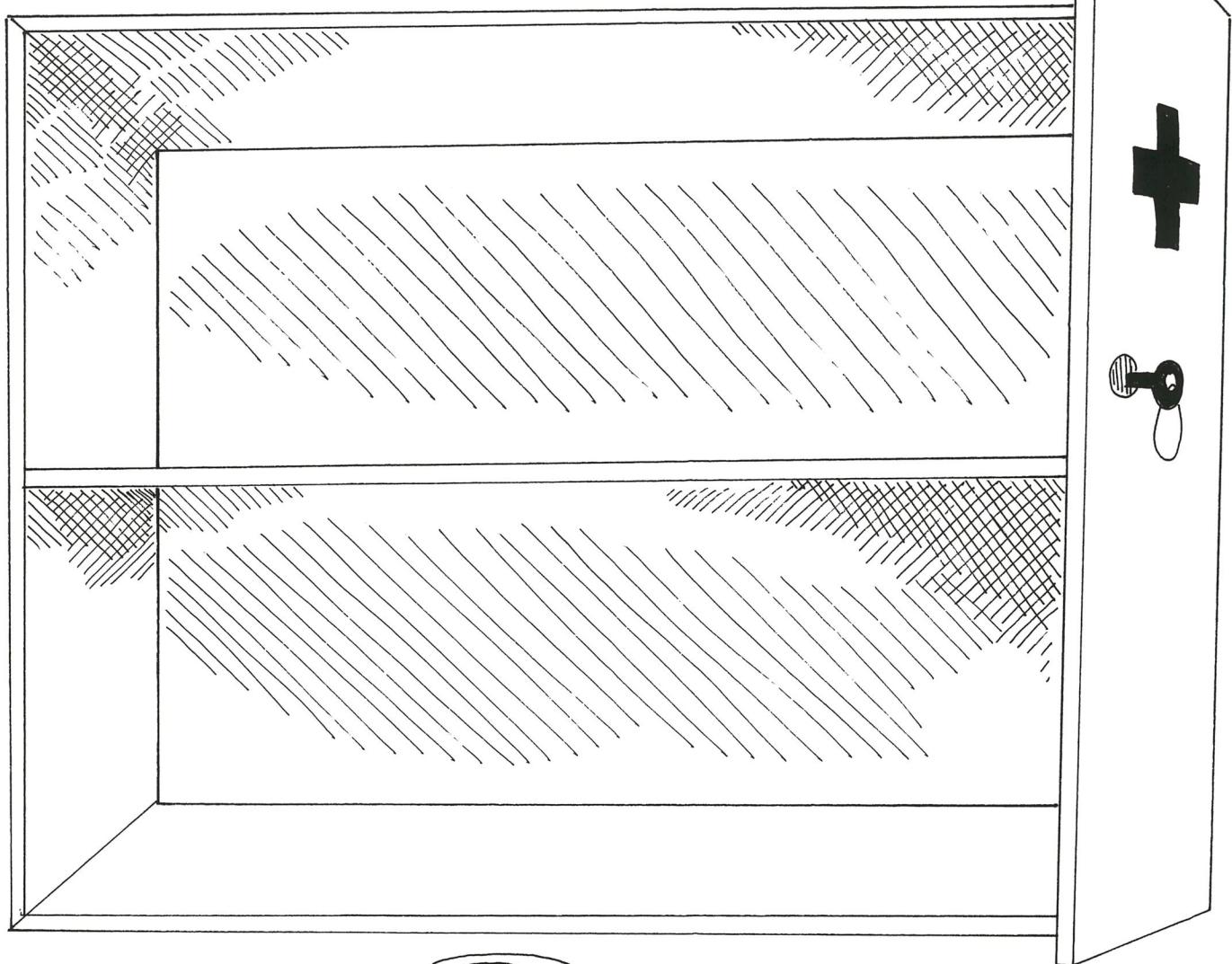
- moving things out of the way
- telling other children not to be afraid
- sending someone for a grown up
- putting something soft under the child's head and turning them on their side
- being a friend when they wake up.

Children can practise these first aid techniques with a partner. Distribute Worksheet 3. Cut out the jigsaw pieces and reassemble to form the picture of Little Poss being helped by his friends.



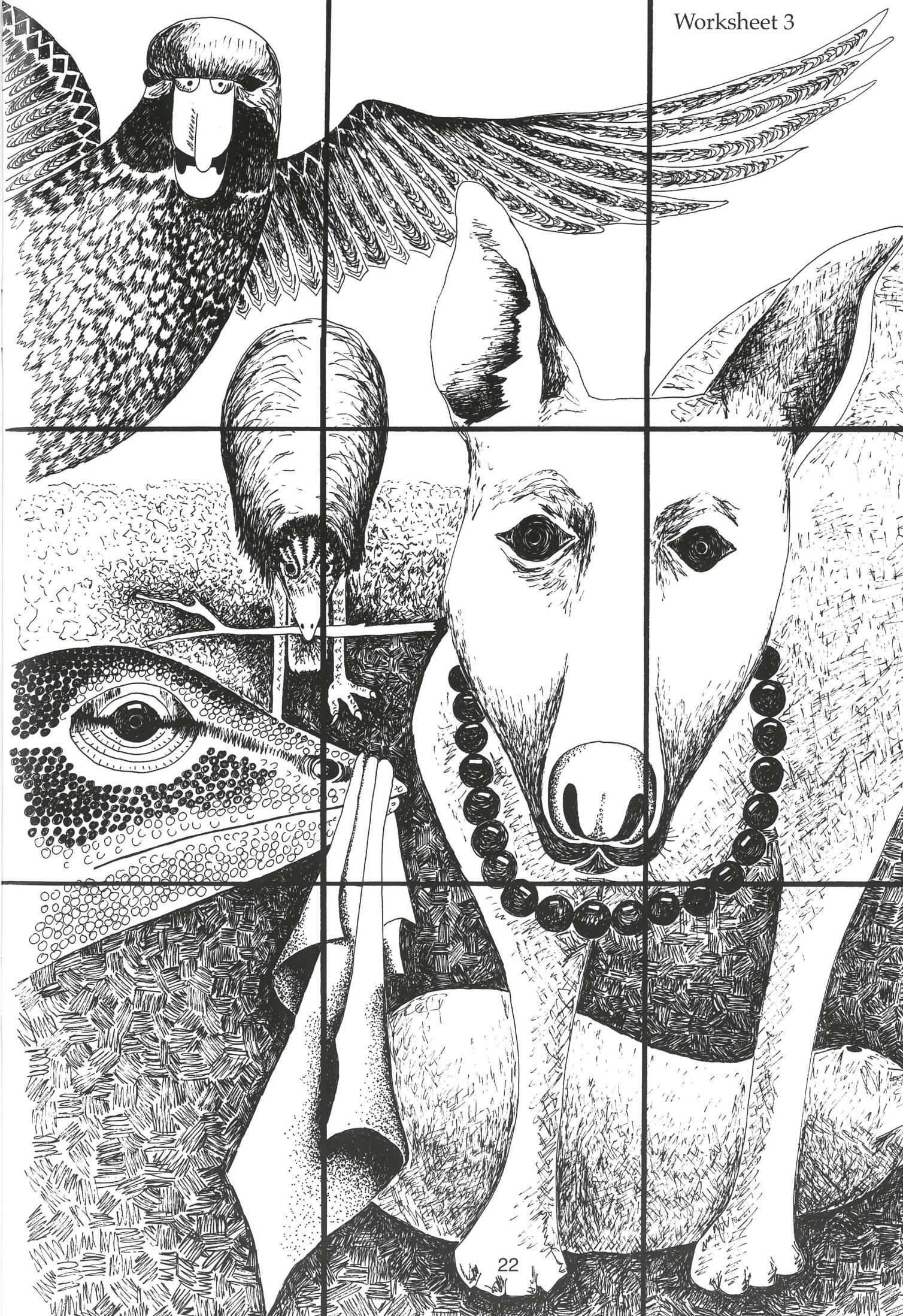
Do you know where these parts belong inside your body?  
Cut out each of the body parts and paste in the correct place on the body shape.

## Worksheet 2



Little Poss's medicine has to be kept in a special cabinet. Do you know why medicine must be kept in a special place?

Help find the things that belong in the medicine cabinet.



# FACTS ABOUT EPILEPSY

## 1. *Epilepsy can affect anyone.*

People can develop epilepsy at any stage of their lives, but the majority (over 70%) have their first seizure during childhood or adolescence.

## 2. *Seizures take a variety of forms.*

A seizure does not necessarily involve convulsions or loss of consciousness. Some people have brief, blank episodes. Others experience sudden localised jerking, a sense of déjà vu, or distorted sensations such as strange feelings in the abdomen.

## 3. *There are a number of provoking factors which may induce seizure activity.*

The majority of people with epilepsy have excellent seizure management through a combination of the right medication and the adoption of a positive, healthy lifestyle. However, there are a number of factors that may provoke seizures in people with epilepsy. They include lack of sleep, stress and high temperature as a result of an infection.

## 4. *Medical treatment is very effective.*

Epilepsy is normally treated with medication and through this, more than 80% of people with epilepsy can expect improved or complete control.

## 5. *Flickering and flashing lights rarely trigger epilepsy.*

Photosensitive epilepsy is rare. Very few children with epilepsy (5%) are adversely affected by flashing or flickering lights. Visual display units are NOT a problem for the vast majority of people with epilepsy and most school children with epilepsy will NOT be adversely affected by attending classes involving computers and television sets.

## 6. *The majority of seizures are over quickly.*

If a seizure does occur, keep calm and do not restrain the person unnecessarily. If they are unconscious, remove any hard objects from the area, place something soft under the head, loosen any tight clothing and place the person in recovery position as soon as possible. It is normally not necessary to call for medical help unless the attack lasts for more than five minutes or an injury has occurred.

*The initial development of this picture story book was made possible  
through financial assistance from the  
Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation.*

This delightful book is the second in a series which tackles the fears and misconceptions surrounding epilepsy. With the help of simple words and pictures, the book tells the tale of Little Poss, a possum who sometimes goes wobbly and shakes all over. The book covers the issues of medication and first aid for seizures.

