

For Ages 4-7  
De 4 a 7 años

# Tears Are Not Forever

## Las lágrimas no son para siempre

Elizabeth Verdick

Ilustrado por  
Marieka Heinlen



English-Spanish  
Inglés-Español

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free spirit  
PUBLISHING®



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For anyone who has ever needed  
a shoulder to cry on. Big hug!

—E.V.

For Marcy, a true Nonna, who's devoted much of her  
life to teaching and helping young  
children.

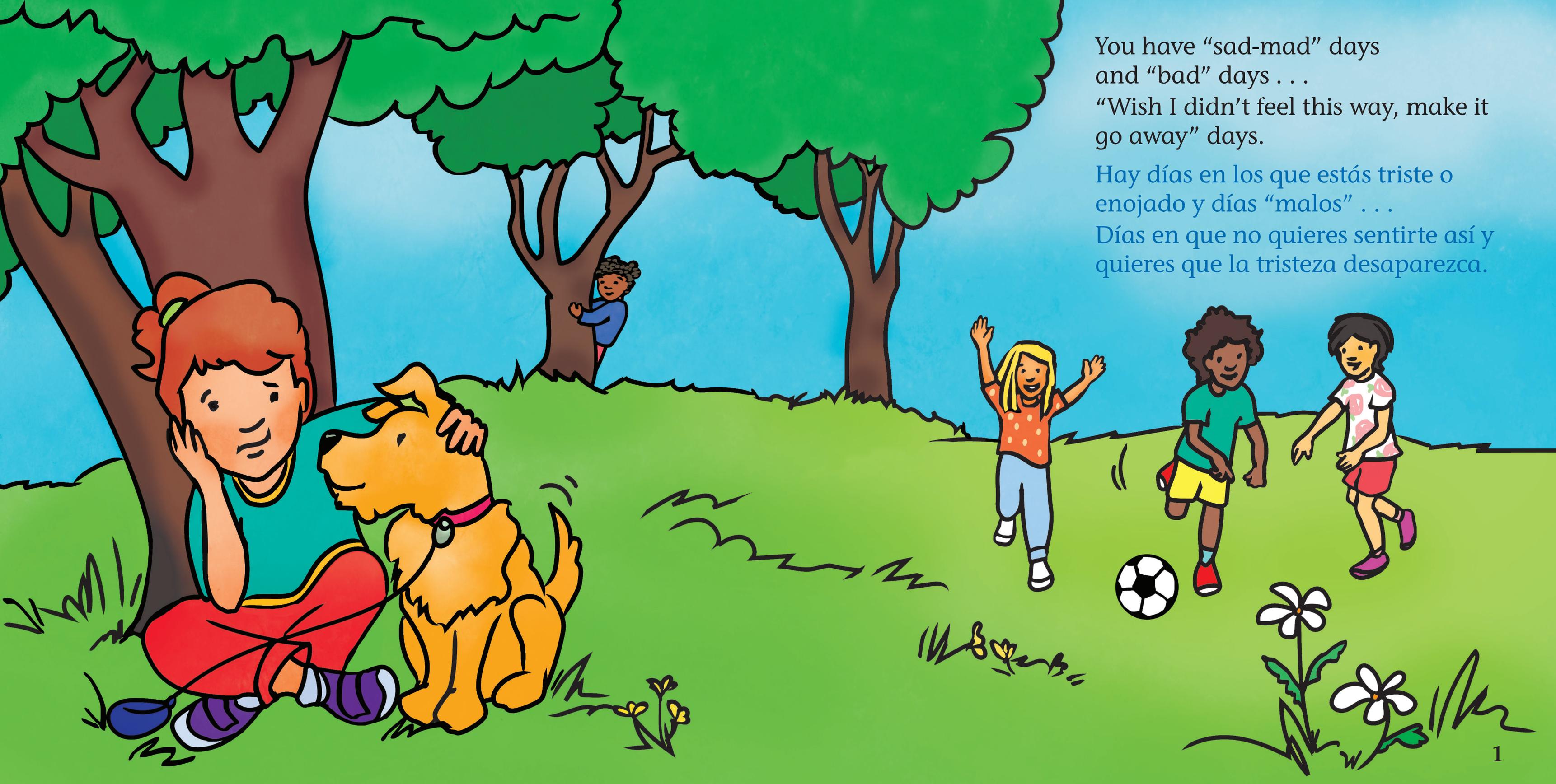
—M.H.

A todos los que alguna vez han necesitado un hombro  
sobre el cual llorar. ¡Un abrazo fuerte!

—E. V.

Para Marcy, una verdadera nonna, que ha dedicado  
gran parte de su vida a enseñar y  
ayudar a los niños pequeños.

—M. H.



You have “sad-mad” days  
and “bad” days . . .  
“Wish I didn’t feel this way, make it  
go away” days.

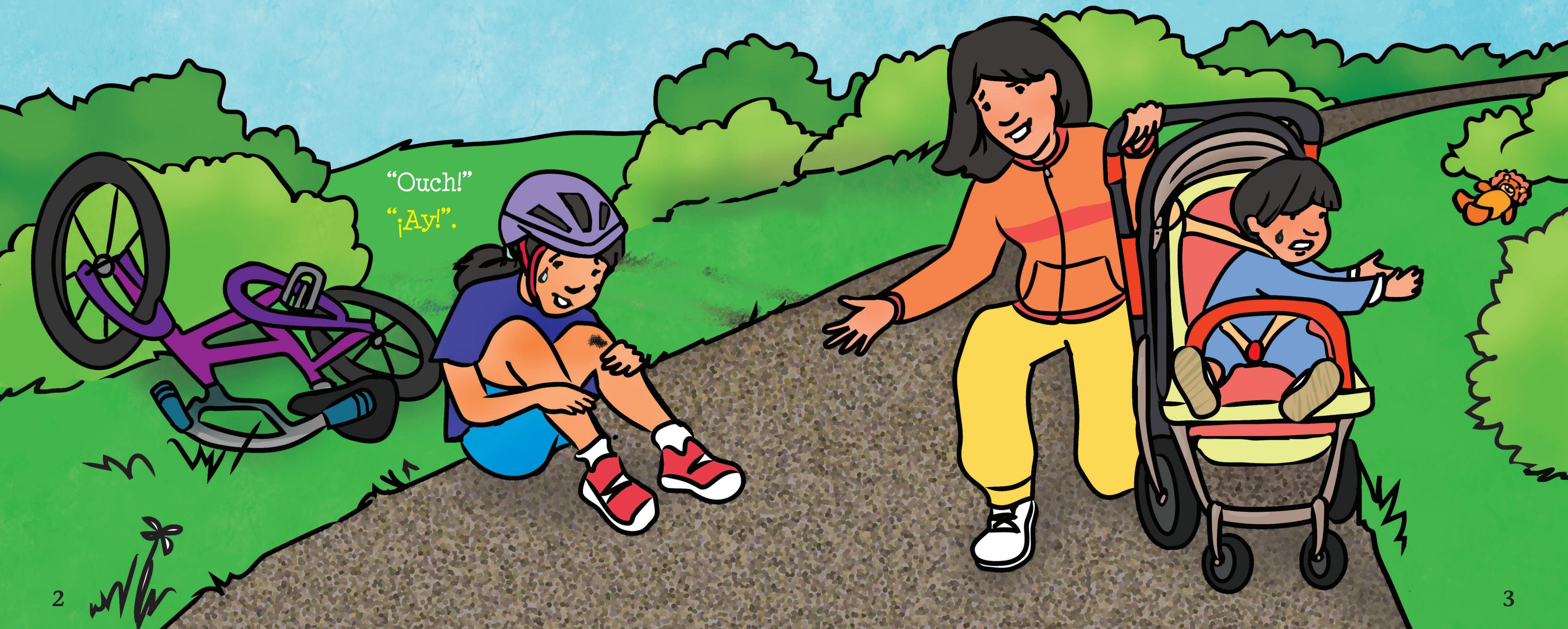
Hay días en los que estás triste o  
enojado y días “malos” . . .  
Días en que no quieres sentirte así y  
quieres que la tristeza desaparezca.

You have times when your body  
or feelings get hurt.

A veces te lastimas o alguien  
hiere tus sentimientos.

Or when you've lost something you love.

O pierdes algo que quieres mucho.



## Tips and Activities for Parents and Caregivers

Crying is a natural human response to strong feelings. Learning how we as human beings both express and handle our feelings is an important skill for children of all ages.

### Start with Acceptance

For adults, it can be distressing when a child cries. But it's important to respond with acceptance and validation. A crying child may be mad, frustrated, overstimulated, disappointed, sorrowful, or grieving. You can help by searching for the underlying emotions and their cause and showing empathy through your words and actions.

### What Response Works?

Remind children of what they can do to feel better on their own and with guidance. Make sure your words and actions are helpful, not hurtful.

### Responses to Avoid

Avoid telling your child to “stop,” offering rewards and bribes, and being the constant soother. Of course you want to be a source of comfort to a crying child. But be sure to encourage self-soothing skills as well.

#### What to Say

- ▲ “I see that you’re sad/upset/struggling right now. I’m here for you.”
- ▲ “I want to listen—can we talk?”
- ▲ “You’re safe. Let’s talk about what’s going on.”
- ▲ “Let’s be a team and find out what’s bothering you. Please let me help.”
- ▲ “I can try to help you feel better. Let’s take a deep breath together.”
- ▲ “It’s okay to cry. Everyone cries—children and grown-ups too.”
- ▲ “Do you need a hug? I’m a good hugger.”

#### What NOT to Say

- ▼ “Don’t cry.”
- ▼ “It’s not a big deal—don’t be so upset.”
- ▼ “Big boys/girls/kids don’t cry.”
- ▼ “Don’t be such a baby.”
- ▼ “Get over it.”
- ▼ “Why are you being so sensitive?”

**Note:** Crying may not be the first thing you see when a child is hurting. Sadness can appear as other emotions or as behavior changes. Symptoms that increase or recur over time are signs of a child in distress. Don’t wait—reach out for professional support.

### How to Encourage Self-Soothing

As adults, we have strategies for comforting and restoring ourselves, and we can model and practice these things with children.

**Take a break together.** When a child is upset, try going outside for fresh air and a change of scenery. Indoors, you might sit by a sunny window, find a cozy stuffed animal, or get a sip of cold water.

**Use counting or visual images.** Some children find counting helpful as a way to settle down. Another option is to help the child visualize a place that feels soothing and safe.

**Talk things through.** Ask what happened, what emotions have come up, what you can do to help. Problem-solve together.

**Teach deep breathing.** Taking deep breaths is a skill that can help children in all sorts of situations. Guide your

child to breathe in slowly through the nose (for a count of five) and then out through the mouth, over and over until a feeling of calm arises.

**Affirm children.** Reinforce children’s understanding that big emotions are common and that we keep working on our feelings all our lives. Sensitivity is a good thing! Big, deep emotions often reflect the capacity for intense joy, love, and empathy.

**Model expressing emotions.** Let children know that you cry sometimes, and tell them what you do to feel better. When children know that people of all ages cry, they feel seen and understood and learn that emotions aren’t something to hide.

**Encourage empathy.** Show children what to do when someone else is crying. Teach your child that making fun of someone for crying is hurtful. Spread the message that we all have big feelings and upsets and we all can help each other weather these tough times.

