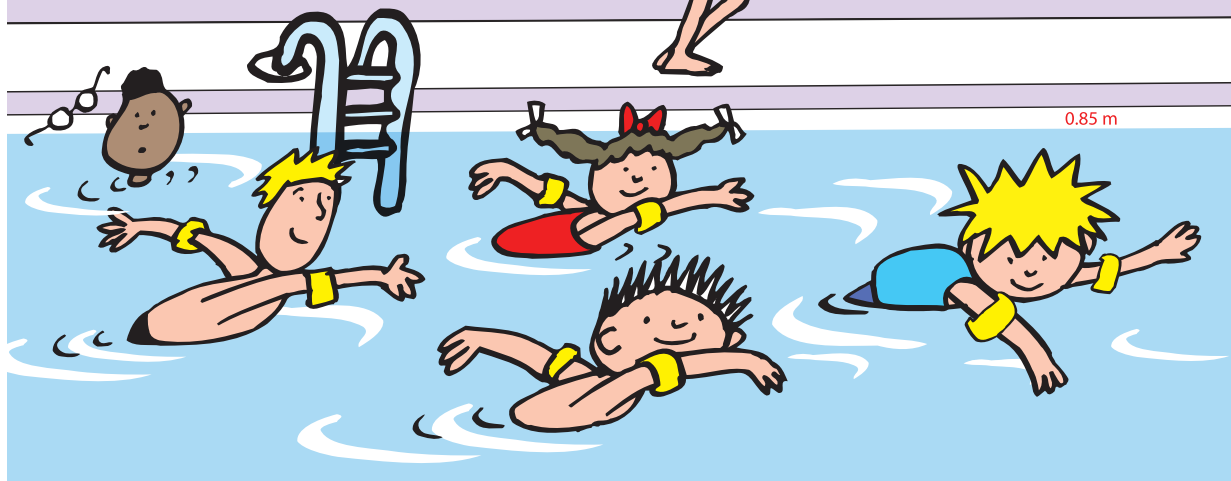
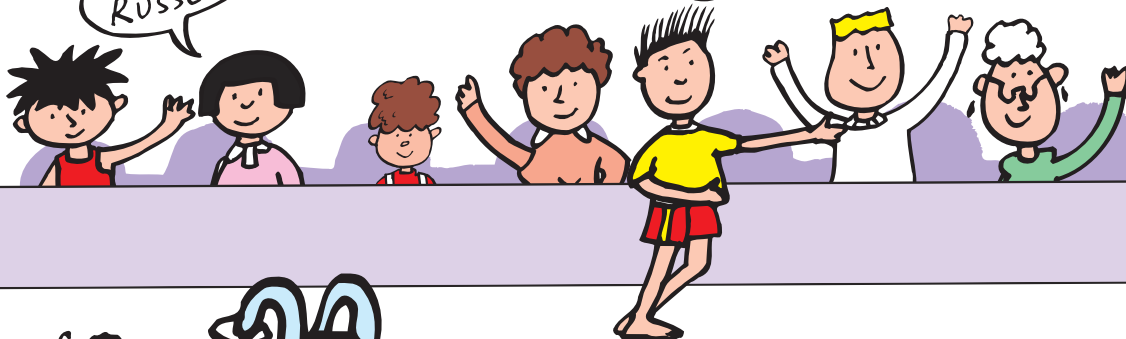




Russell

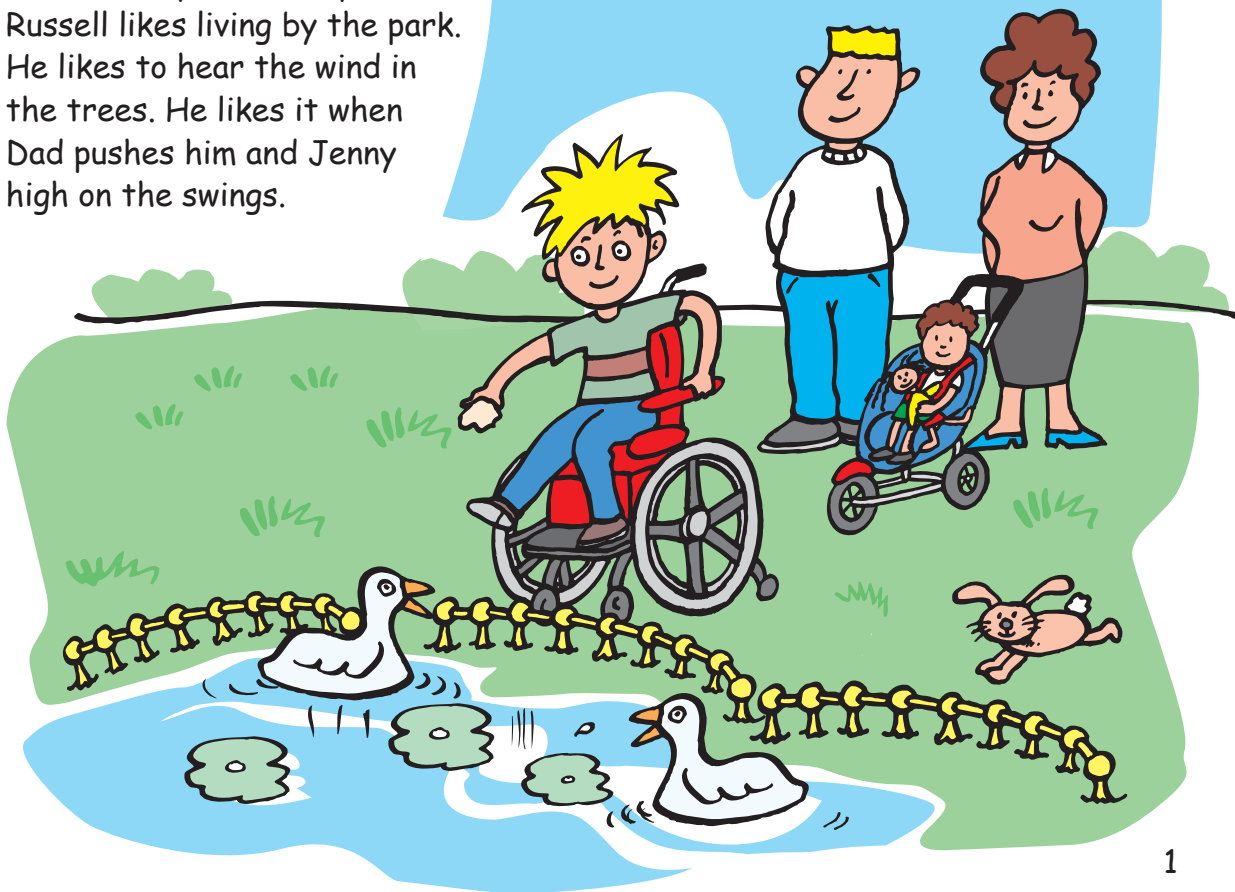
Swimming success

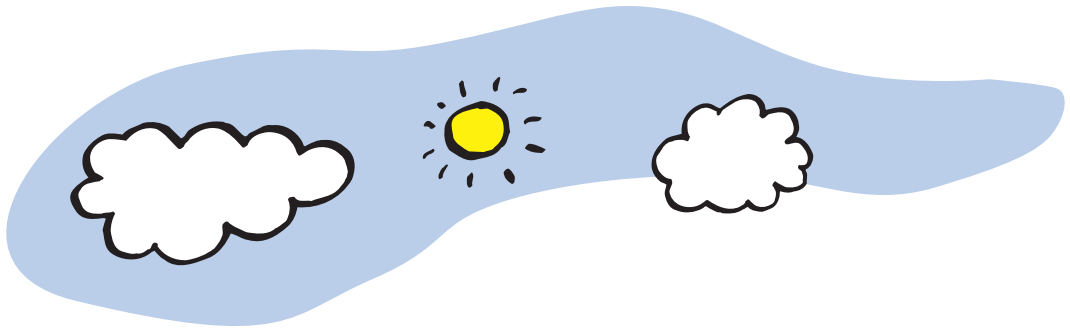
c'mon
Russell





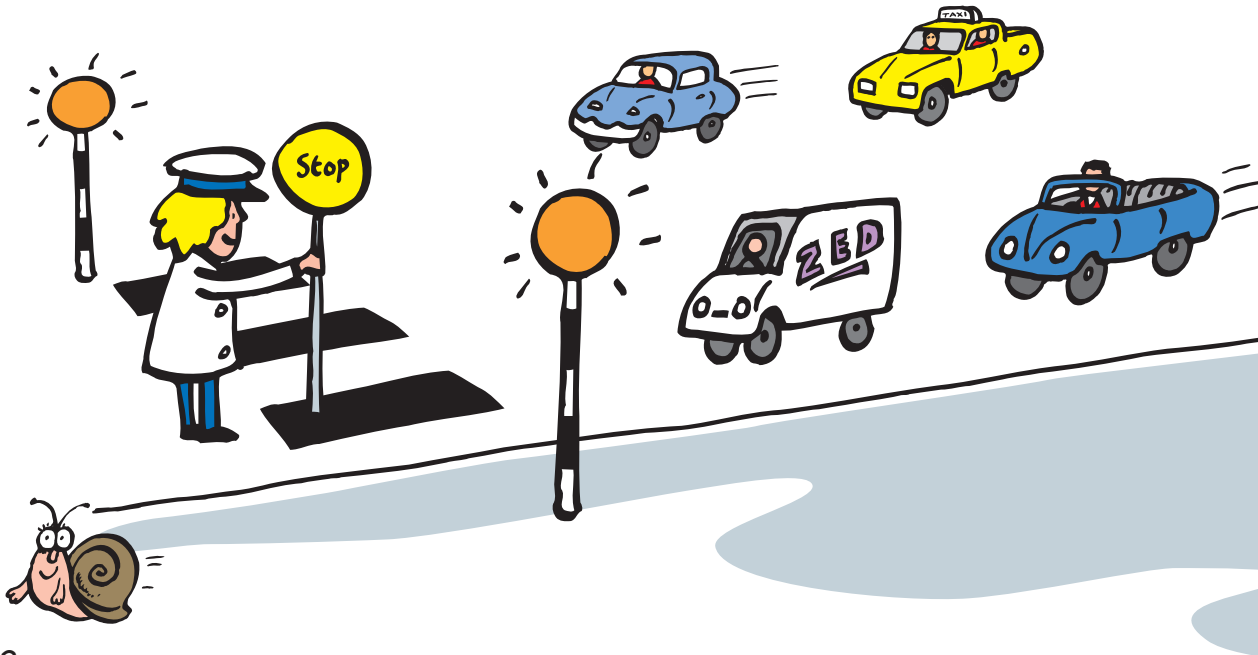
This is Russell. He lives with his Mom and Dad and little sister Jenny near the park. Russell likes living by the park. He likes to hear the wind in the trees. He likes it when Dad pushes him and Jenny high on the swings.





He likes it when the whole family goes on bike rides.

Best of all, he likes to race his Mom and Jenny when they go to school in the mornings.

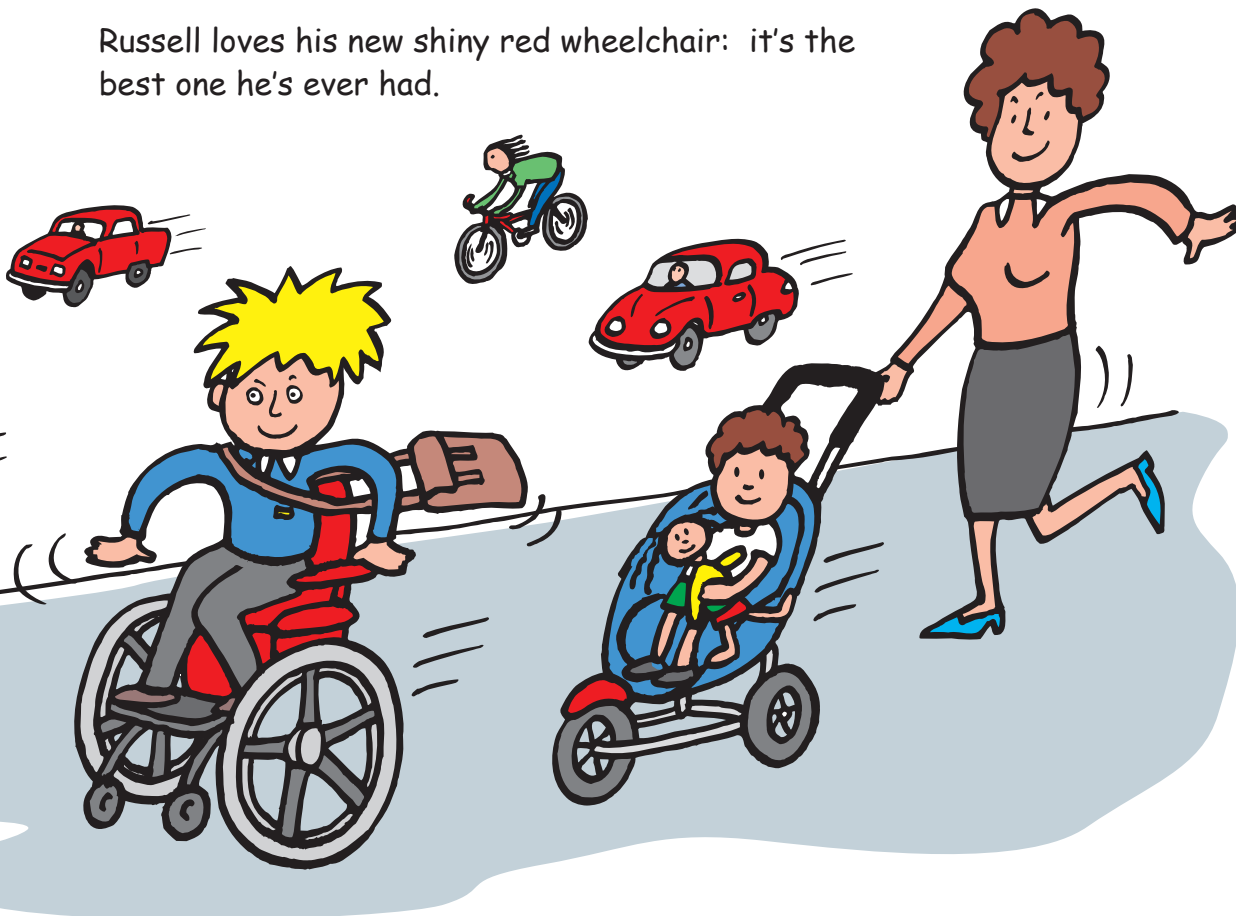


Russell has learned to go fast in his wheelchair.
"Watch me" he shouts as he goes past the ducks on the pond.



Bounce, bounce goes Jenny in her stroller.
"Slow down" calls his Mom, "we're almost there".

Russell loves his new shiny red wheelchair: it's the best one he's ever had.





Russell needs a wheelchair to get around because he has spina bifida. Having spina bifida means that Russell's legs function differently so he cannot walk and run around like lots of his friends.

His bladder and bowels function differently too.

Russell has been going to school for some time now. Before he went to school, he learned how to drain the urine from his bladder using a catheter. Now he stays dry at school and this makes Russell happy.

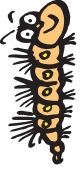
Sometimes though, Russell becomes upset because his bowels are harder for him to manage.

His bowel gets backed up with poop, which makes him feel tired and yucky. Liquid poop leaks and he has to wear a diaper. Sometimes - without him knowing - it all comes out like a big explosion!



When this happens at school Russell is embarrassed and his teacher has to take him to the school nurse and clean him up.

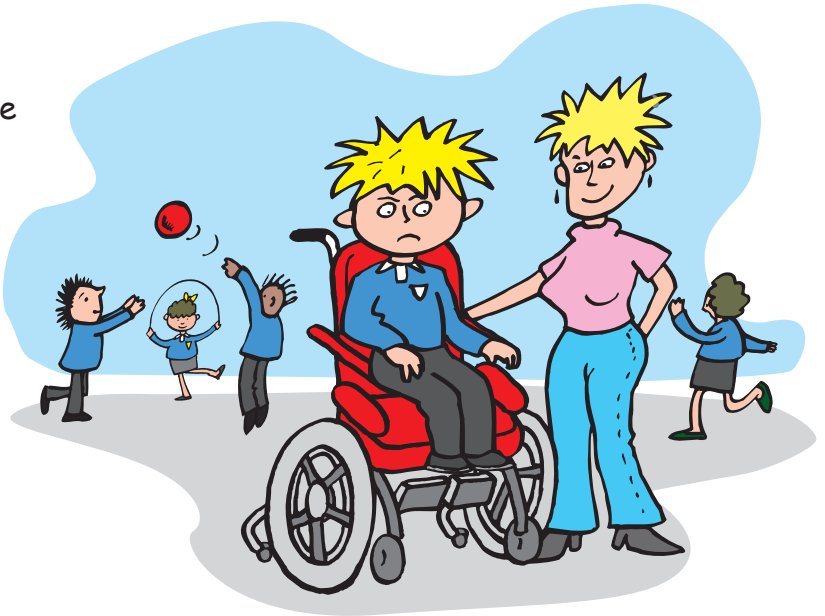
The other children laugh at him and no one wants to sit near Russell after an accident. Having bowel problems means that Russell is often worried. He worries about sleepovers with friends. He worries about going to strange places and meeting new people. He worries about going swimming in case he has an accident in the pool.



And he really really dislikes wearing a diaper.

"I'm just like a baby" he cries, "I want to wear underwear like a big boy".

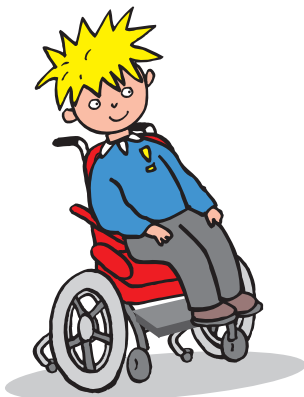
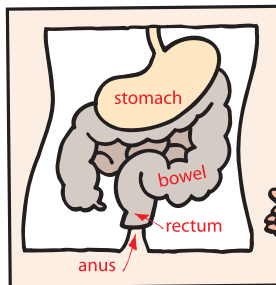
His Mom decides it is time for Russell to learn how to manage his bowels so they go to the clinic to meet with the nurse who knows how to help with bowel management.



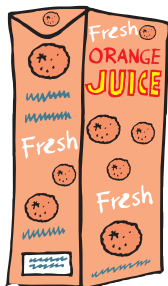
The nurse explains to Russell that everybody has a place in their body called the bowel where poop is made. When the bowel is full it has to be emptied because your body continues to make poop from the food you eat.

Russell learns that it is important to get onto a bowel program. This will help Russell have more regular and less unexpected poop! Russell's Mom gets some material from the nurse about how to keep his poop soft so it will come out easier.

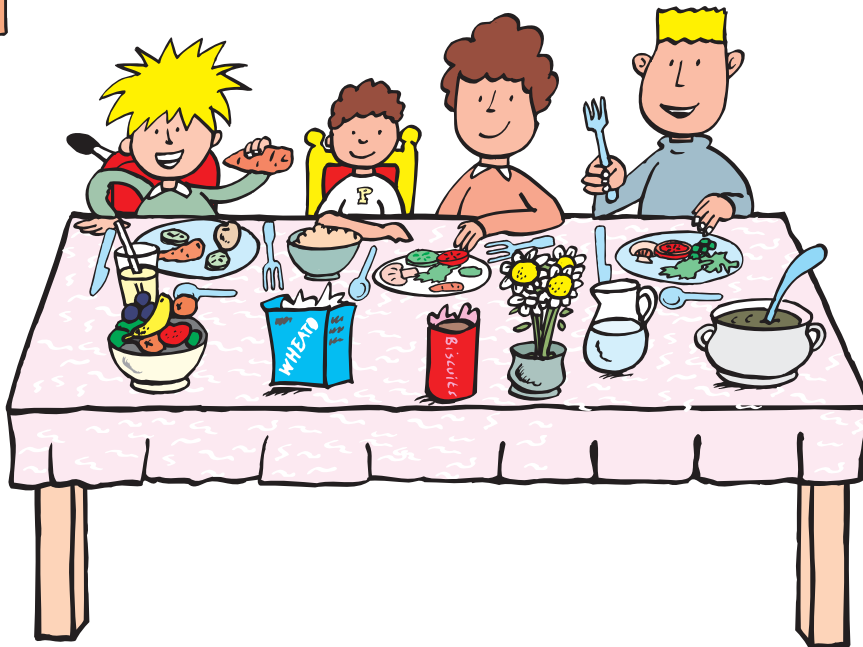
Russell will need to take medicine to help him have regular poops and to keep it soft.



Russell also has to eat food that contains fiber even if it doesn't always taste as good as other things! He needs to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables everyday to help keep his poop soft and regular.

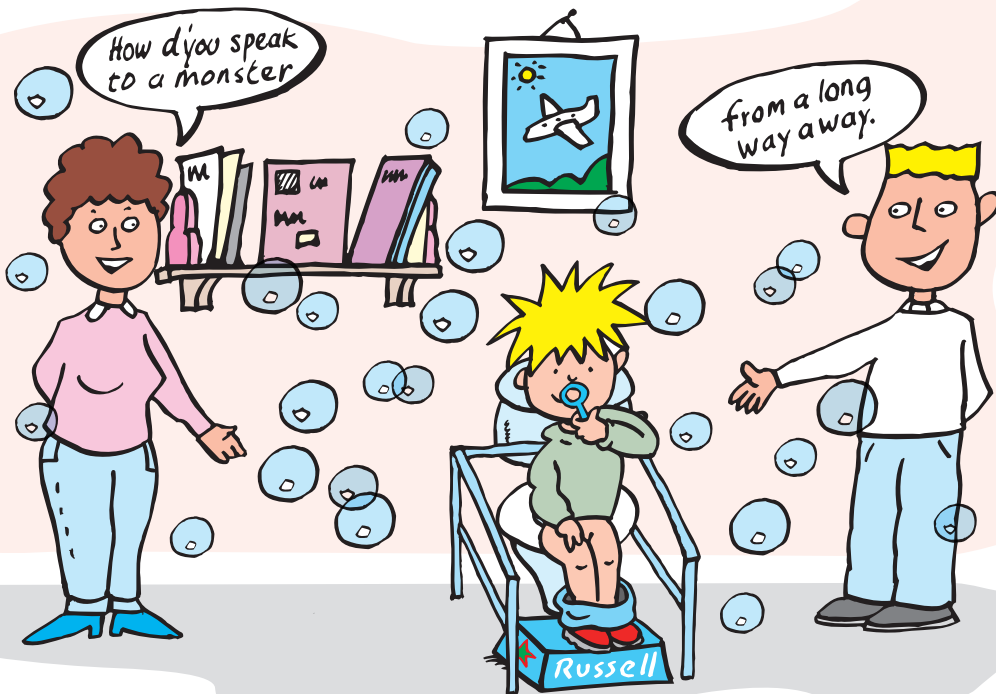


Russell feels proud he remembers he has to drink a lot as well, as this also helps to keep his poop soft. His favorite drink is fresh orange juice.

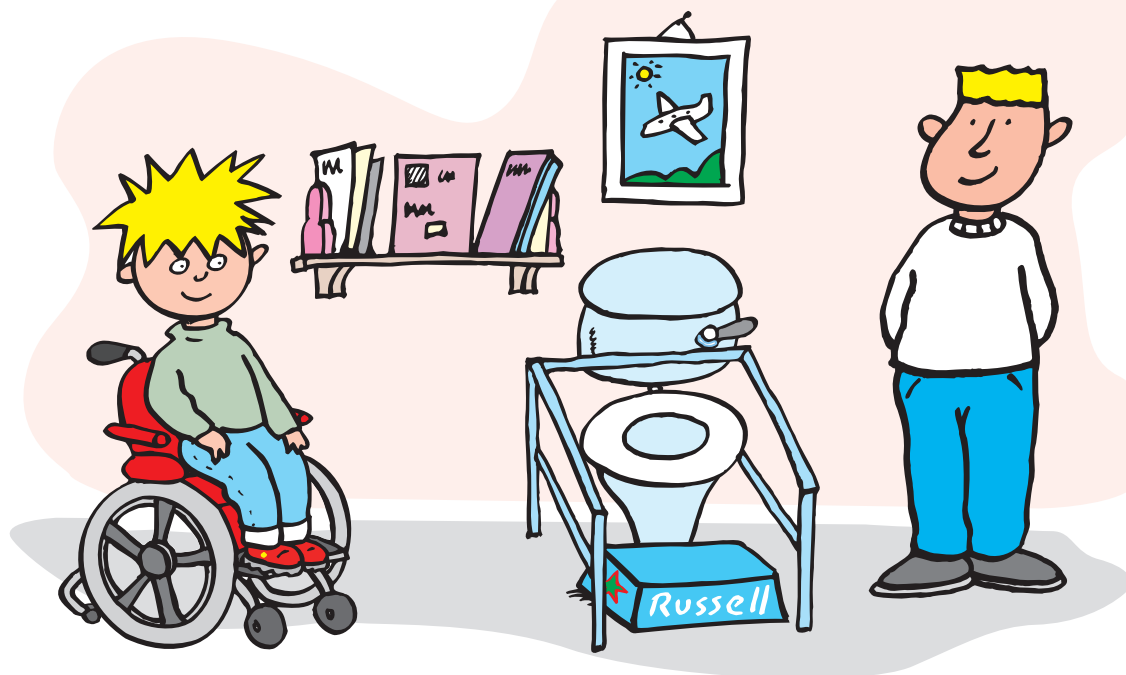


Some days Russell has to sit on the toilet for a long time before he has a bowel movement. His Mom put a magazine rack in the bathroom with lots of Russell's favorite books and comics.

Jenny likes using Russell's toilet too because there is a bottle of bubbles in there! Blowing bubbles helps Russell's tummy muscles push the poop out. The nurse at the hospital says that coughing and laughing help too, so his Mom tells Russell silly jokes to make him laugh!



Russell's dad calls the toilet his throne because it has handles on the side to keep him from falling off, a special soft seat so his bottom doesn't get sore and a little footstool so his feet don't dangle. He is especially proud of his stool as he helped his mom paint it.

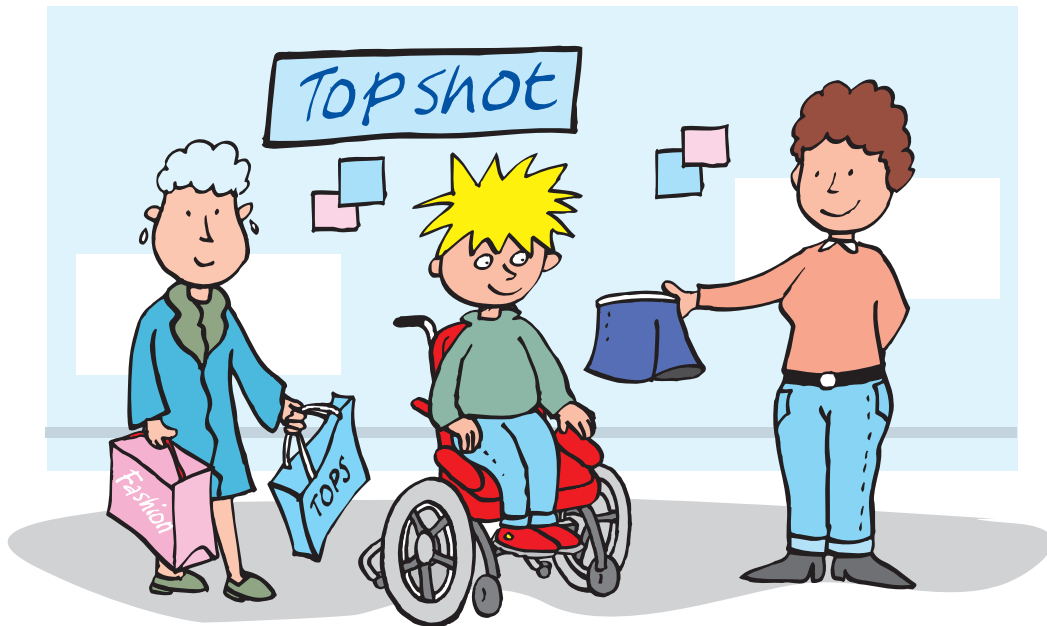


Russell's friend Sam has spina bifida. Sam has had an operation called an A.C.E. to help him with his bowel program. The doctor at the hospital thought this would work better for Sam. He has a little opening (called a stoma) on his skin, which has a tunnel to his bowel.



Sam's mom helps him put a tube into this tunnel and push some fluid through into his bowel. This helps wash the poop out of Sam's bowel. Sam has to sometimes sit on the toilet a long time just like Russell, so he has books and toys in his bathroom too! His mom's jokes aren't always that funny though!





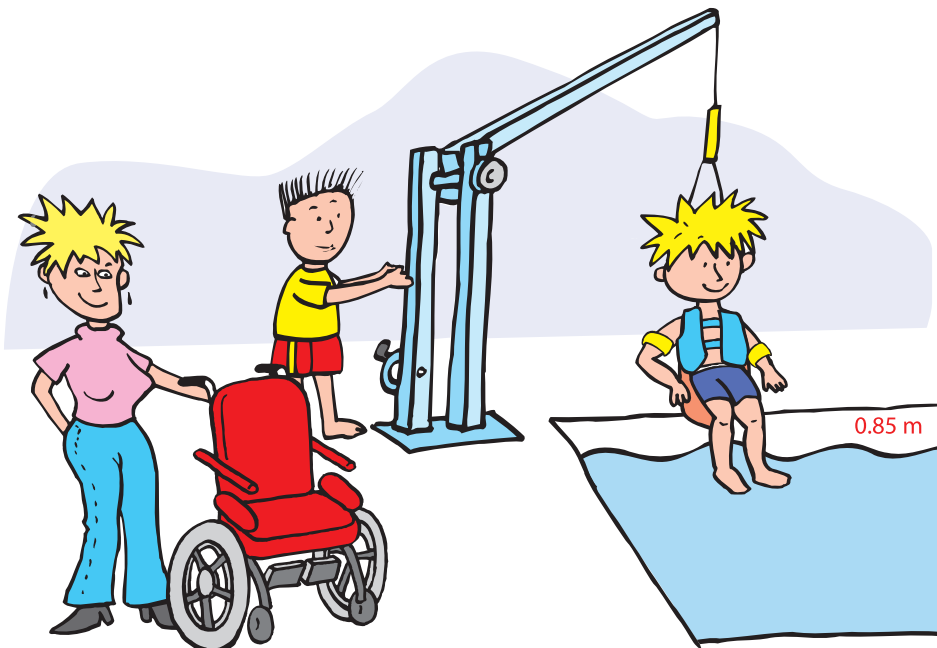
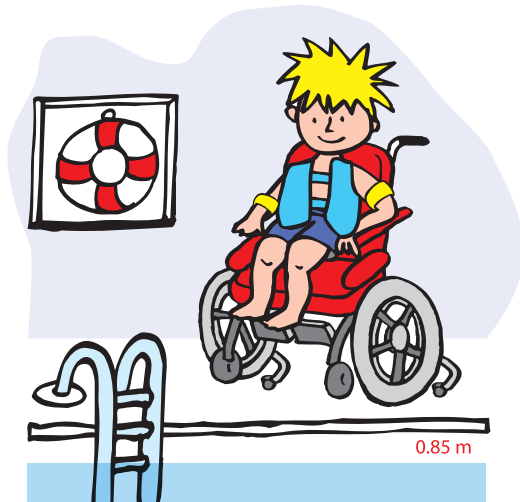
Look at Russell!

Now that he is clean and dry, he can **do anything**
and **go anywhere!**

He and his mom and grandma have been shopping for new clothes.
They buy underwear with cars on them and really cool jeans!
Russell also got new swim trunks, which he thinks
are great!

Russell decides to join the swim team at school. A few weeks later, his mom, dad and Jenny are at the swimming pool to watch the swim meet.

Jenny thinks Russell looks great in his swim trunks. The coach helps Russell into the pool with a special hoist so he can get ready for his race.



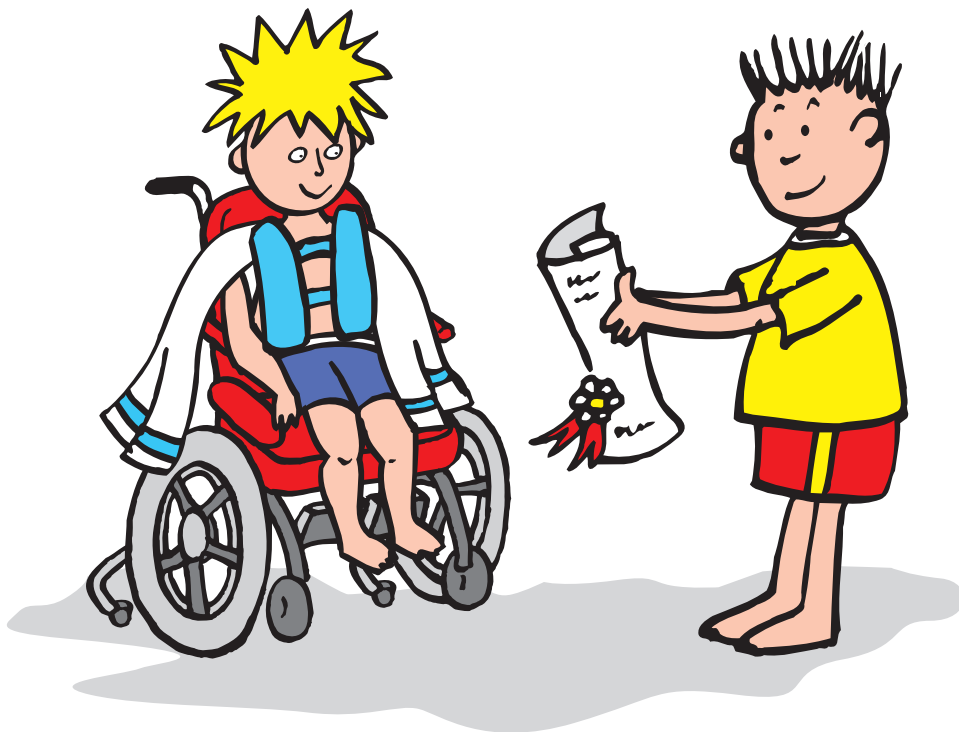
"Come on Russell," shouts his mom - then **"Hooray, Hooray"** as Russell wins the race!



Russell is so proud of himself. He has worked so hard to make sure he is no longer wet or having accidents.



And now he has his **first swimming ribbon!**



Some words you may not know:

ACE: Antegrade Continence Enema - an operation that lets you wash the poop out of your bowel through an opening on your abdomen that goes to your bowel.

Anal Plugs: are made from a soft and comfortable foam. They sit inside your bottom to stop poop from coming out. They might be used when you go swimming. Your doctor needs to prescribe them for you.

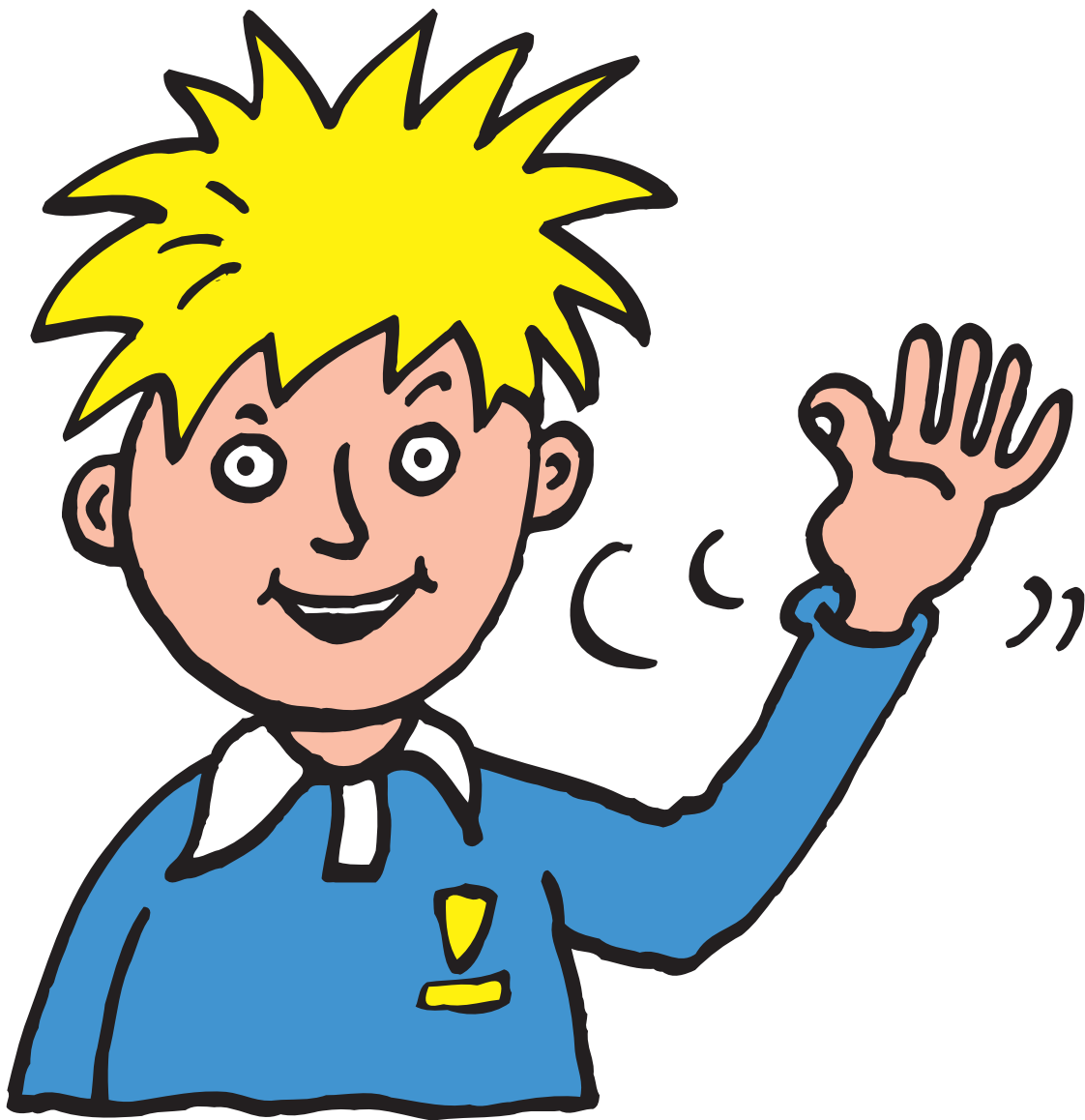
Bowel: the place in your body where poop is made and stored.

Fiber: foods that are good for your bowel.

Spina bifida: a condition that some babies have when born. The bones of the spine are not formed properly and the child's legs, bladder and bowel do not work properly.

Stoma: an opening on the outside of the body with a tunnel to the inside.







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