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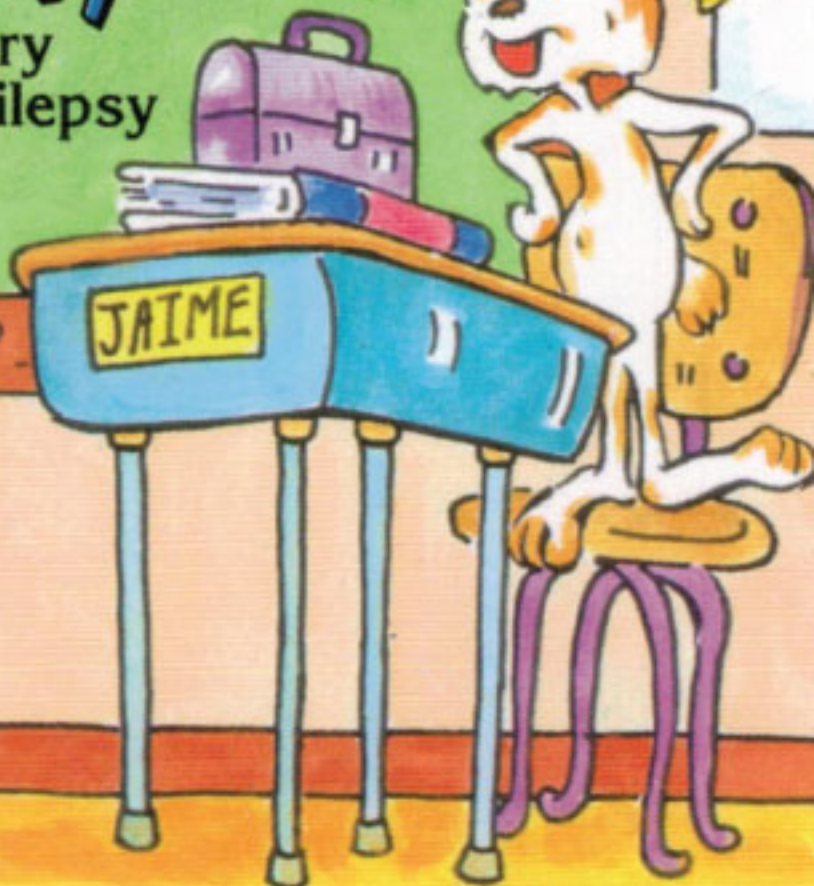
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# Taking Seizure Disorders to School

A Story  
About Epilepsy

by  
Kim Gosselin

Illustrated by  
Moss Freedman



*This book is dedicated to all children  
living with seizure disorders.  
And of course, to Wendi and Jaime,  
with love and understanding.*

#### A Note from the Author:

As the mother of two children living with special health concerns (insulin dependent diabetes and asthma), I soon became aware of a tremendous void in our educational system. Although I found plenty of information for me (and some for teachers), none addressed my children's conditions as they pertained to their peers in the classroom. For my kids, this was a number one priority!

No child likes to be singled out as being "different," much less tormented or teased because of a medical condition. I firmly believe that ignorance is not bliss! All children deserve to be educated regarding the special needs of their classmates.

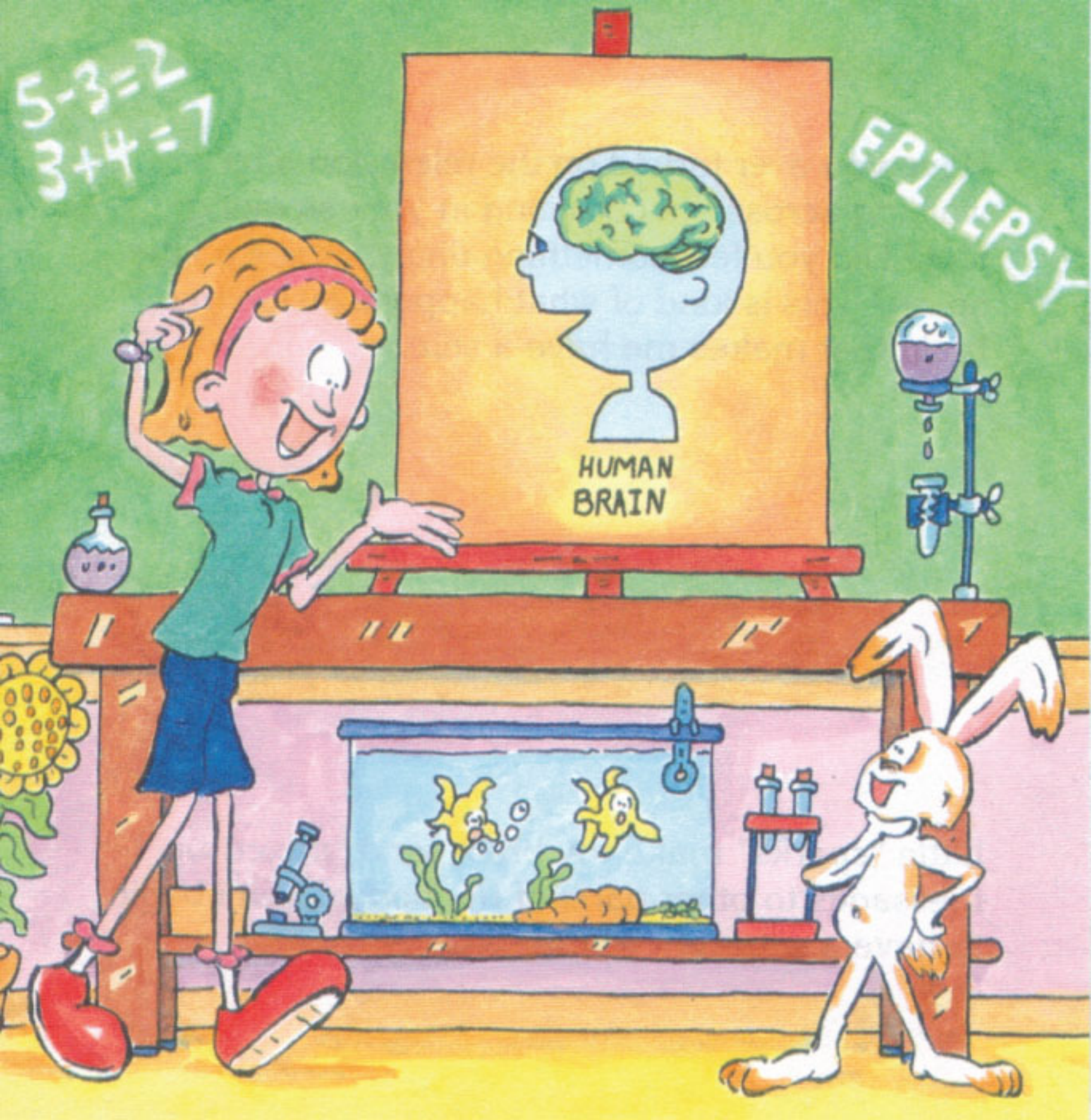
***Taking Seizure Disorders to School*** was designed and written to be read aloud in the child's classroom. If you don't feel comfortable reading aloud, ask the teacher, school nurse, counselor, or perhaps even the children themselves. Try to make it a fun and special event by getting them involved, especially during the short quiz found at the end of this book.

Perhaps, someday, the world and those within it will shed a little more understanding and acceptance on those not so fortunate. That is the goal to which I strive, for my children and for yours.

***Kim Gosselin***

Hello boys and girls! My name is Jaime, and I'm a kid living with a seizure disorder. Epilepsy is another name for seizure disorders. Having epilepsy means part of my brain doesn't always work exactly the way it is supposed to. Because of this, sometimes I may look or act differently than I normally do.

Everybody has a brain, but not everybody has epilepsy.



Have you ever turned on the television after walking across the carpeting in your stocking feet? Did you feel something tingly, or see a little spark? This is kind of what happens inside my brain that makes me have a seizure.

Little “sparks” make my brain send “mixed-up” messages to other parts of my body. Then I begin to have a seizure.



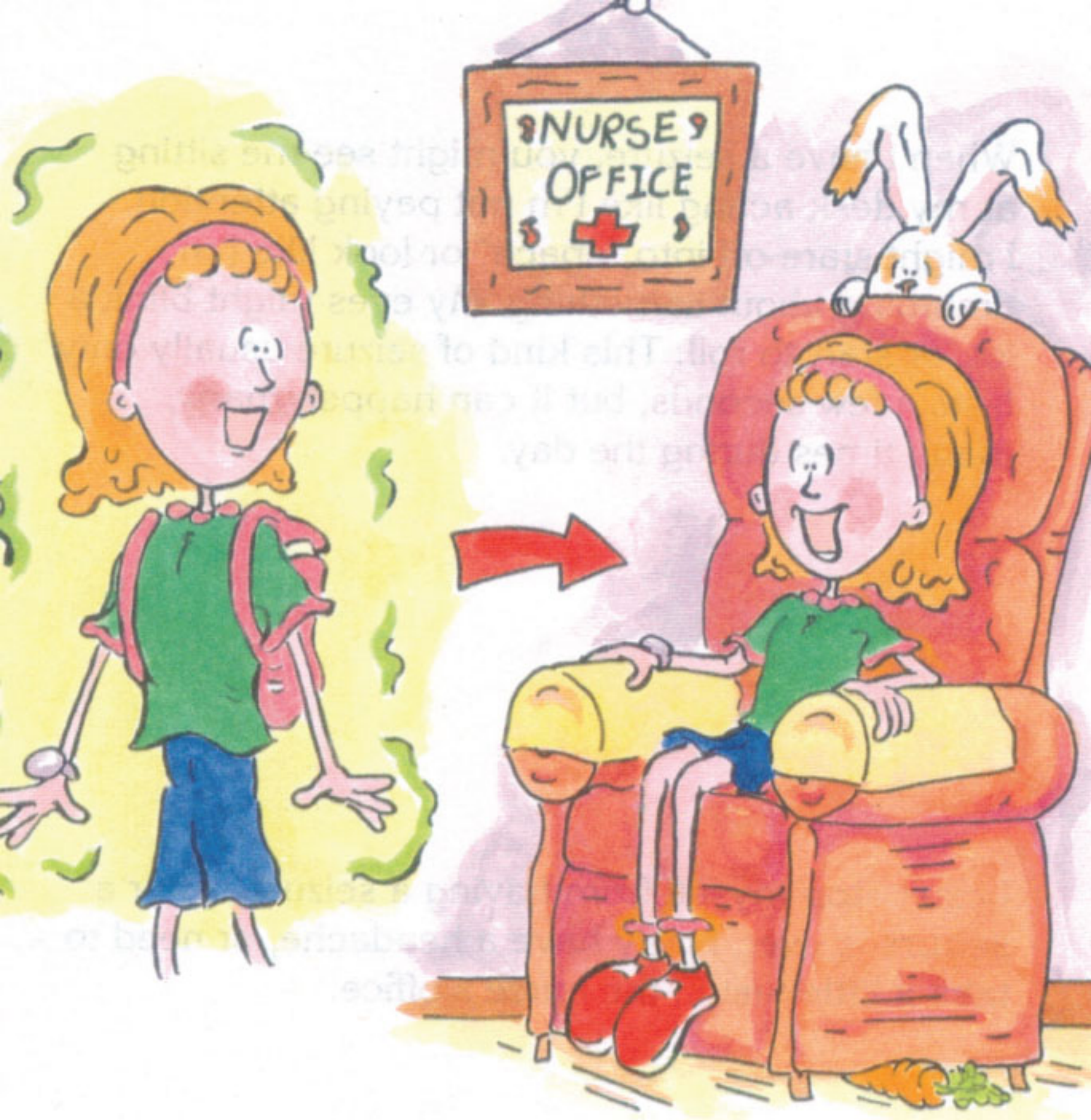
Doctors and nurses don't know why I have epilepsy. I didn't do anything wrong, and it's **nobody's** fault! It's okay to play with me and be my friend.

I can't give you epilepsy or make you have a seizure.



There are many different kinds of seizures. Kids with epilepsy can have one or more kinds of seizures (like me). They can happen any time of the day or night. Medicine helps control my seizures, but it doesn't stop me from having them altogether. Sometimes though, my body gives me a "signal" that a seizure might be coming. This is called an "aura."

An "aura" really is just like a tiny, tiny seizure. It sometimes comes before a bigger seizure. It can make me want to go to a safe place.



When I have a seizure, you might see me sitting at my desk acting like I'm not paying attention. I might stare off into "space" or look like I'm dreaming about something. My eyes might blink a lot, or start to roll. This kind of seizure usually only lasts a few seconds, but it can happen many, many times during the day.

I can't stop myself from having a seizure. After a seizure is over, I may have a headache, or need to take a little rest in the nurse's office.




One kind of seizure can look a little scary to someone who's never seen it before. This seizure usually makes me go unconscious (like a sudden sleep). Sometimes I make strange-sounding noises, or do other things I normally wouldn't do. My body gets very stiff and then starts to shake. Please don't be afraid of me. You might even help me by telling the teacher or school nurse.

The teacher can help too, by turning me on my side and staying with me until the seizure is over. Don't ever try to stop my seizure, and never put anything in my mouth. And NO, it's not true that I could swallow my tongue during a seizure. It's not even possible!


Remember, a seizure is just something my body needs to do. It's really nothing to be afraid of.



**1.**  
DO NOT  
PANIC!



**2.** REMEMBER: A SEIZURE MIGHT LOOK SCARY,  
BUT IT'S SOMETHING MY BODY NEEDS TO DO.



**3.**  
A SEIZURE SHOULD  
ONLY LAST A  
FEW MINUTES.



When I first found out I had epilepsy, doctors and nurses worked very hard to find out what kind of seizures I had. This helped them decide what kind of medicine was best for me, and how much to give me. I still go for “check-ups” where they measure how much medicine is in my blood. This helps keep my seizures in good control.

I take my medicine at home and also at school. It's important to take it whenever the doctors and nurses have told me to, and always on time!



Has anyone noticed the special bracelet I always wear? On the back it tells that I have epilepsy. It also has a phone number to call in case of emergency (like if I had a seizure that lasted longer than a few minutes, or if I got in an accident). The people who answer the phone can tell the caller about epilepsy and how to take special care of me.

I never take my bracelet off. It's very important to me and can even help keep me safe!



Because I may have seizures during the school day, sometimes I need a little more time to finish my work. I'd like my teachers and classmates to understand that I'm not goofing off or being lazy when I'm having a seizure!

Kids with seizure disorders aren't dumb or stupid! Sometimes we just need a little extra time to "catch up."



# COMPUTER SIGN-UP

JAIME ----- 12:30

RABBIT - - - - 12:30

JERRY - - - - 1:00

Having seizures is only a very small part of who I am. During most of the school day I'm doing all the same things that you are. I like to play at recess, go to art and gym class, and have lots of friends too!

Having epilepsy doesn't stop me from doing anything other kids do! Sometimes I just need to be a little extra careful.



Maybe someday there will be a cure for seizure disorders. That means my doctors and nurses will be able to stop them! Until then, please don't be afraid of me, or treat me any differently just because I have epilepsy.

After all, nobody's perfect. In fact, I bet I'm a lot like you in every other way!



## Let's Take The Seizure Disorders Kids' Quiz!

1. What part of my body causes me to have seizures?

**My brain.**



2. Can you catch a seizure disorder from me, or anybody else?

**No, seizure disorders are not contagious!**

3. Did I do anything wrong to cause my seizure disorder?

**No, and it's nobody's fault either!**

4. How long do most seizures last?

**Usually only a few seconds or minutes at the most.**

5. If you see me have a seizure at school, what can you do to help me?

- a. Tell the teacher or school nurse.
- b. Help me to my side.
- c. Stay with me.
- d. All of the above.

**d. All of the above.**

6. Should you put anything in my mouth when I'm having a seizure?

**Absolutely not!**



7. Could I swallow my tongue during a seizure?  
**No, it's not even possible.**
8. Name five things that may tell you I'm having a seizure.
1. Staring off into space
  2. Rolling my eyes
  3. Falling to the ground
  4. Making strange noises
  5. Stiff and shaking body
9. What is the "signal" called that sometimes tells me I'm going to have a seizure?  
**An "aura."**
10. Can I stop myself from having seizures?  
**No, medicine helps control them, but it doesn't stop them from happening altogether.**



11. Does having a seizure disorder stop me from doing anything other kids do?  
**Not usually. Sometimes I just need to be a little extra careful.**
12. Should you treat me any differently just because I have a seizure disorder?  
**No. Just be patient and understanding.  
Remember, I'm a lot like you in every other way!**

*Great job! Thanks for taking the Seizure Disorders Kids' Quiz!*

## **Ten Tips for Teachers**

- 1. Each child living with epilepsy or a seizure disorder is different.**  
Learn your student's type of seizures and the warning signs that precede it.
- 2. Epilepsy is the most common cause of a seizure disorder.**  
There are other causes as well. High fevers, head injuries, and low blood sugar in a diabetic child are just a few. It's important to know if the student having seizures has epilepsy or if some other condition may be causing the seizure. Different causes may require different treatments.
- 3. Your student living with epilepsy may have several different kinds of seizures.**  
As you get to know your student, you will begin to recognize the differences. Work with your student's parents, caregivers, school nurse, and others involved as a "team player."
- 4. Take time to educate yourself and your other students about epilepsy and seizures.**  
Use this book for the very basic information. You and/or your other students should not be afraid if your student living with epilepsy does have a seizure in the classroom. It is part of their condition. Know how to keep the epileptic child safe and teach your other students to do the same, without fear.
- 5. Be sensitive to your student's feelings after a seizure.**  
The student may be very embarrassed, so be compassionate. Reinforce the fact that having epilepsy is nobody's fault.

- 6. Hold a “Diversity Awareness” day or time within your classroom.**

Discuss the many differences that EVERYONE has, such as red hair, green eyes, blindness, using a wheelchair, wearing glasses, or living with epilepsy.

- 7. Realize that your student living with epilepsy may need some information repeated in the classroom.**

Some types of seizures are difficult to recognize and you may think your student isn't always paying attention. Not true!

- 8. Always notify the school nurse and/or parent if your student has had a seizure in the classroom.**

Occasionally, the student may need medical attention. Often, they may simply feel tired and need to take a brief rest outside the classroom.

- 9. Remember that any type of seizure should only last a few seconds or minutes at the most.**

Seek medical attention immediately during any lengthy seizure.

- 10. Living with epilepsy or a seizure disorder is usually a lifelong condition.**

Medication may help, but it is not a cure. More than anything, your student living with epilepsy needs understanding, compassion, and acceptance. Never make them feel as though they are “different.” Treat them like your other students, and you will be helping them greatly.