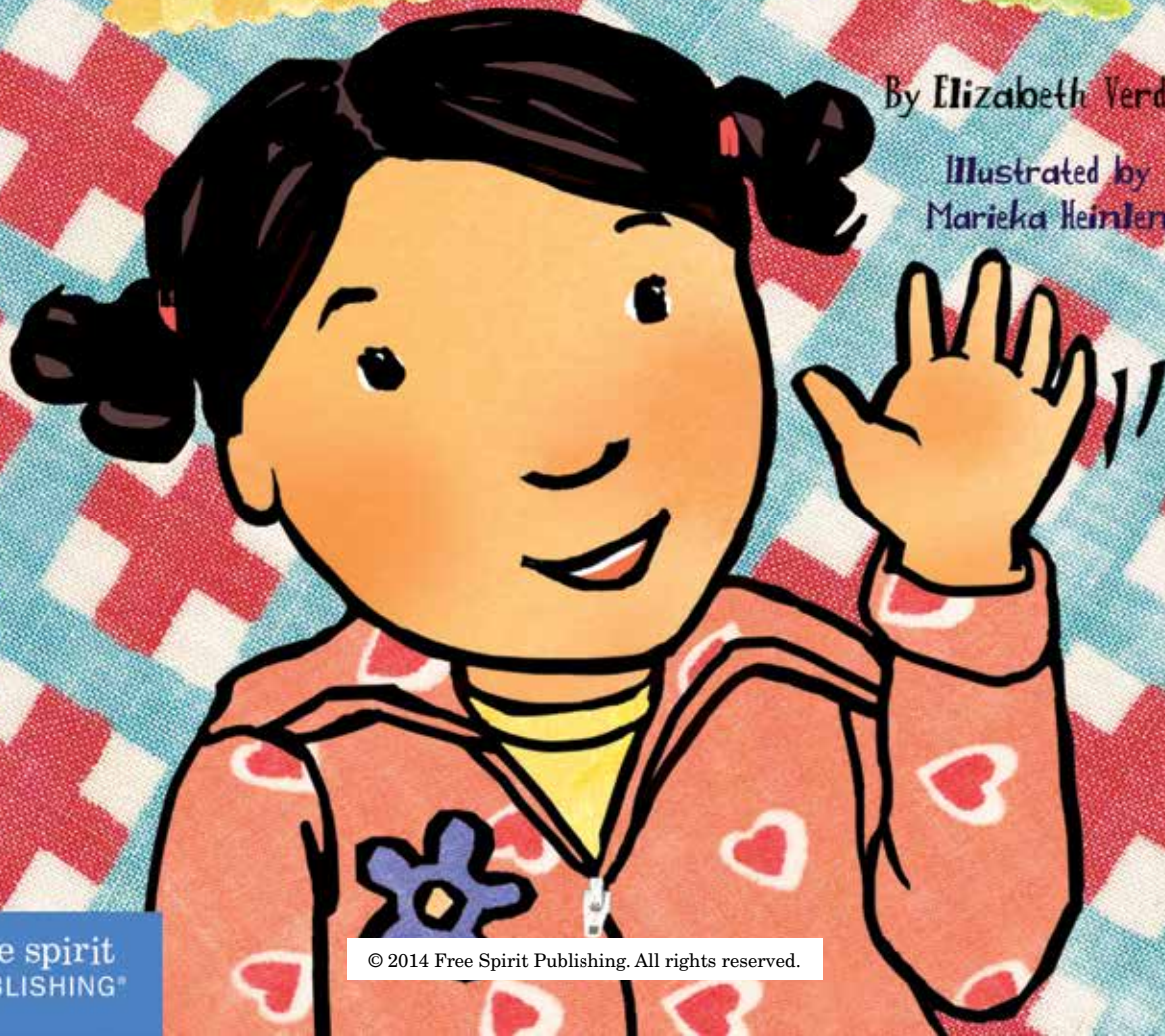


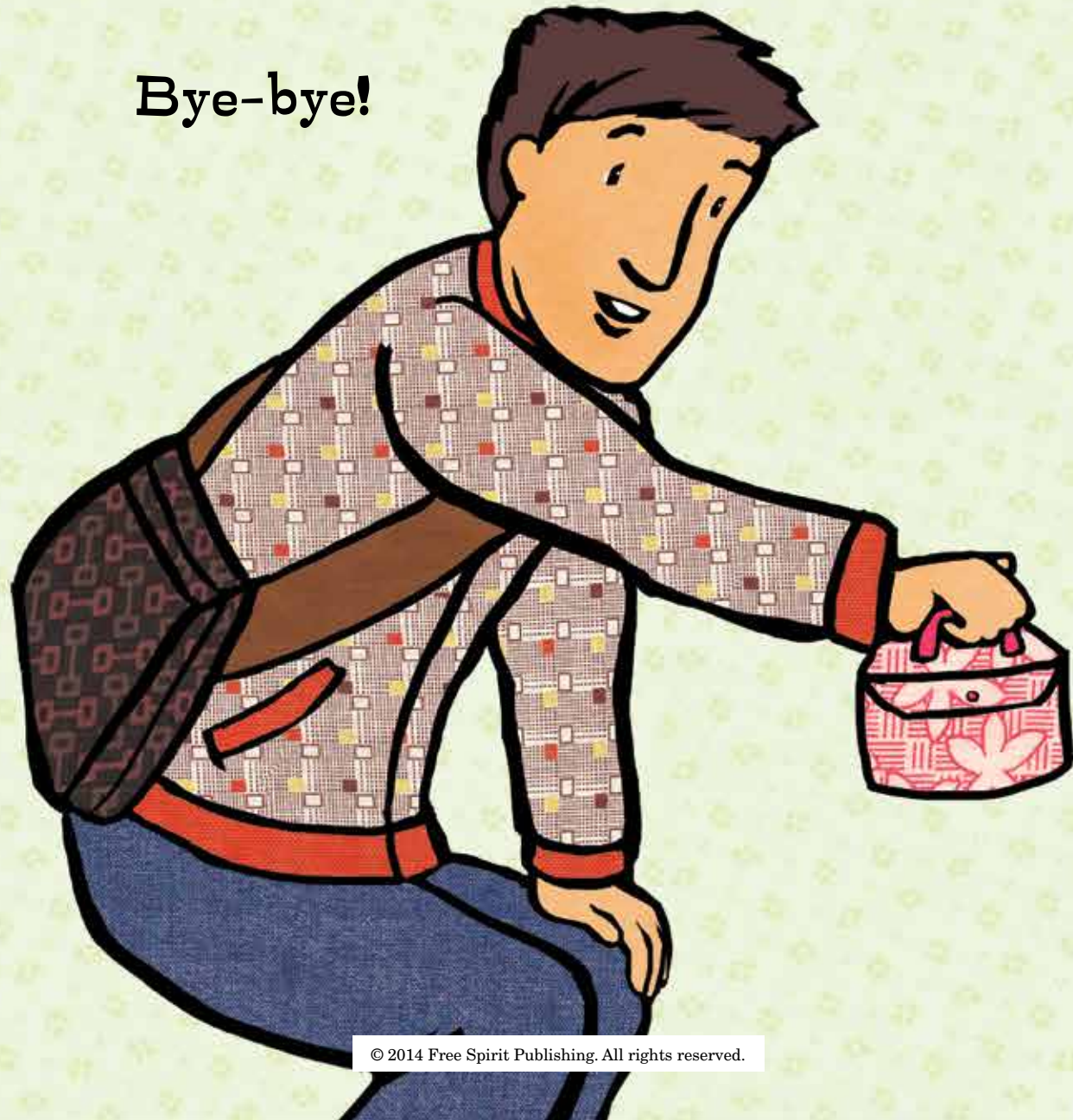
# Bye-Bye Time

By Elizabeth Verdick

Illustrated by  
Marieka Heinlen



Bye-bye!



A cartoon illustration of a woman with dark hair in two buns, wearing a patterned orange and white top. She is smiling and holding the hand of a child whose arm is visible in the upper left, wearing a patterned sleeve and a red cuff. A teddy bear is visible behind her on the right. The background is a light green pattern.

Can't I  
**please**  
come with  
you?



See you later, alligator!

# Bye-Bye Tips for Parents & Caregivers

Bye-bye time doesn't have to mean meltdowns and tears. Try the following to help separations go more smoothly:

**Stay positive.** If you look sad or worried, the separation will be more difficult for your child. Stay casual and upbeat, and smile. Leave extra time for good-byes so there's no rush or frantic exit. Don't sneak out to avoid a scene—your child will feel more anxious after discovering you're gone.

**Prep your child.** Your child's caregiver, whether a childcare worker, baby-sitter, or grandparent, is someone your child will trust and rely on. You can help strengthen this bond by speaking warmly of that special person. Try, "Tomorrow, you get to stay with Grandpa. How fun!" Or "It's exciting to see your friends and teacher." This emphasizes the fun to come.

**Be ready for tears.** Many toddlers cry when a parent leaves, even if they're excited about the childcare center or have been left with a baby-sitter before. They eventually learn to say good-bye with fewer upsets. If your child cries or protests, follow through with the good-bye in a friendly, matter-of-fact way. Handling separations is an important milestone for your child.

**Create a ritual.** A good-bye ritual can help instill confidence. Give each other big bear hugs and funny fish kisses; rub noses or touch foreheads. Have a special good-bye wave, high five, or handshake you save for these occasions. Choose a silly good-bye rhyme—"Toodle-oo, kangaroo"—to put a smile on your child's face.

**Teach calming skills.** Show your child how to take deep breaths in and out, find a quiet place, or use a comfort object like a blanket or doll.

**Leave a reminder.** Offer a family photo, a special memento, or a kiss on the palm to hold tight and save so your child has something special to keep close while you're away. Above all, remind your child that good-bye isn't forever and "hello" will be even sweeter after you've been apart.

**Keep the lines of communication open.** If you're the parent, spend a moment talking with the caregiver about what your child is looking forward to or might need while you're away. If you're the person caring for the toddler, part of your role is helping to reassure the child—and parent—that everything will be okay. Most caregivers report that children really do calm down within minutes of a parent's departure. It can help to remember or be reminded of that.

If good-byes are continually distressing for your child over a period of time, seek help from a healthcare provider or children's behavior specialist.

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