

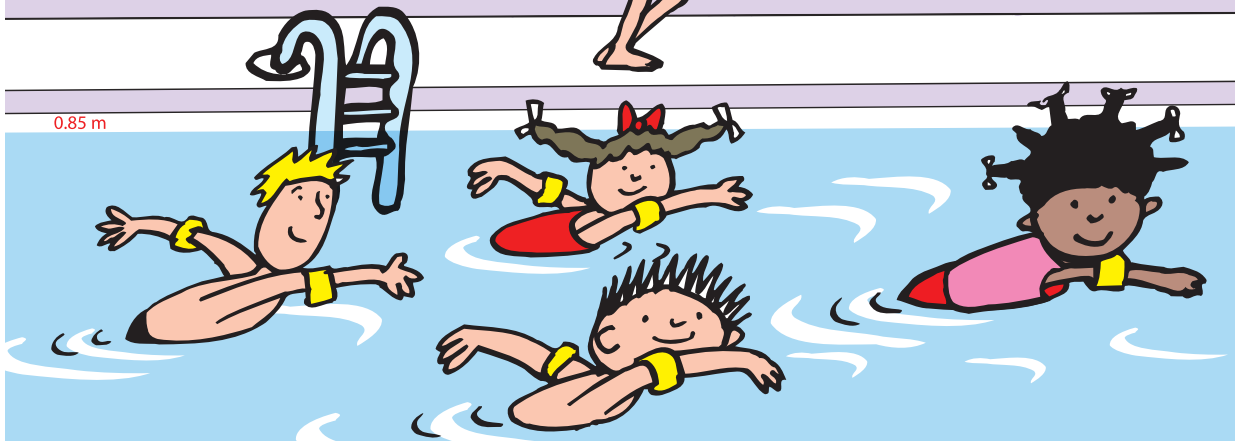
# Millie

Swimming success

come on  
Millie



0.85 m

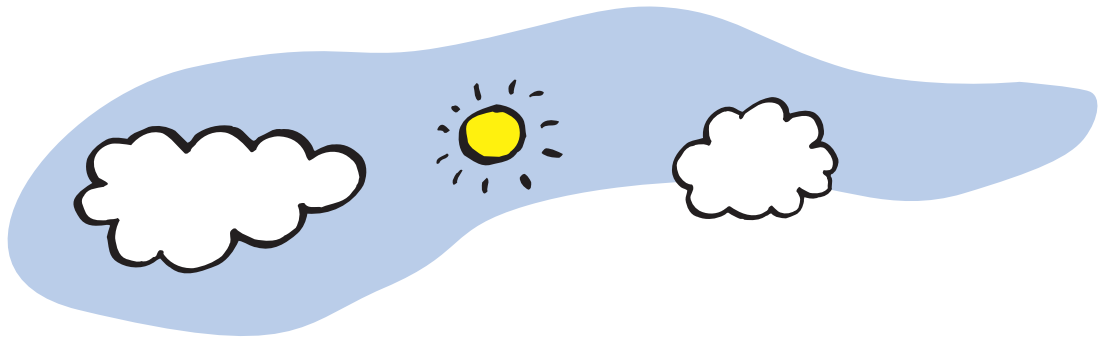






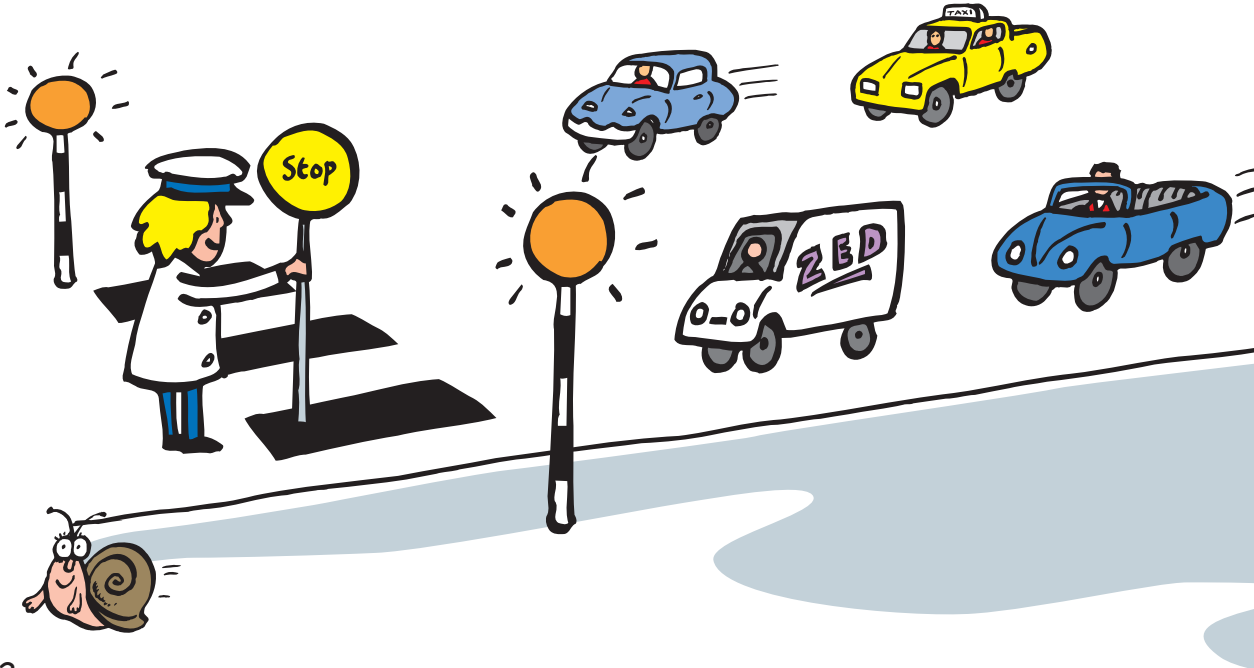
This is Millie. She lives with her Mom and Dad and little brother Peter near the park. Millie likes living by the park. She likes to hear the wind in the trees. She likes it when Dad pushes her and Peter high on the swings.





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

Best of all, she likes to race Mom and Peter when they go to school in the mornings.

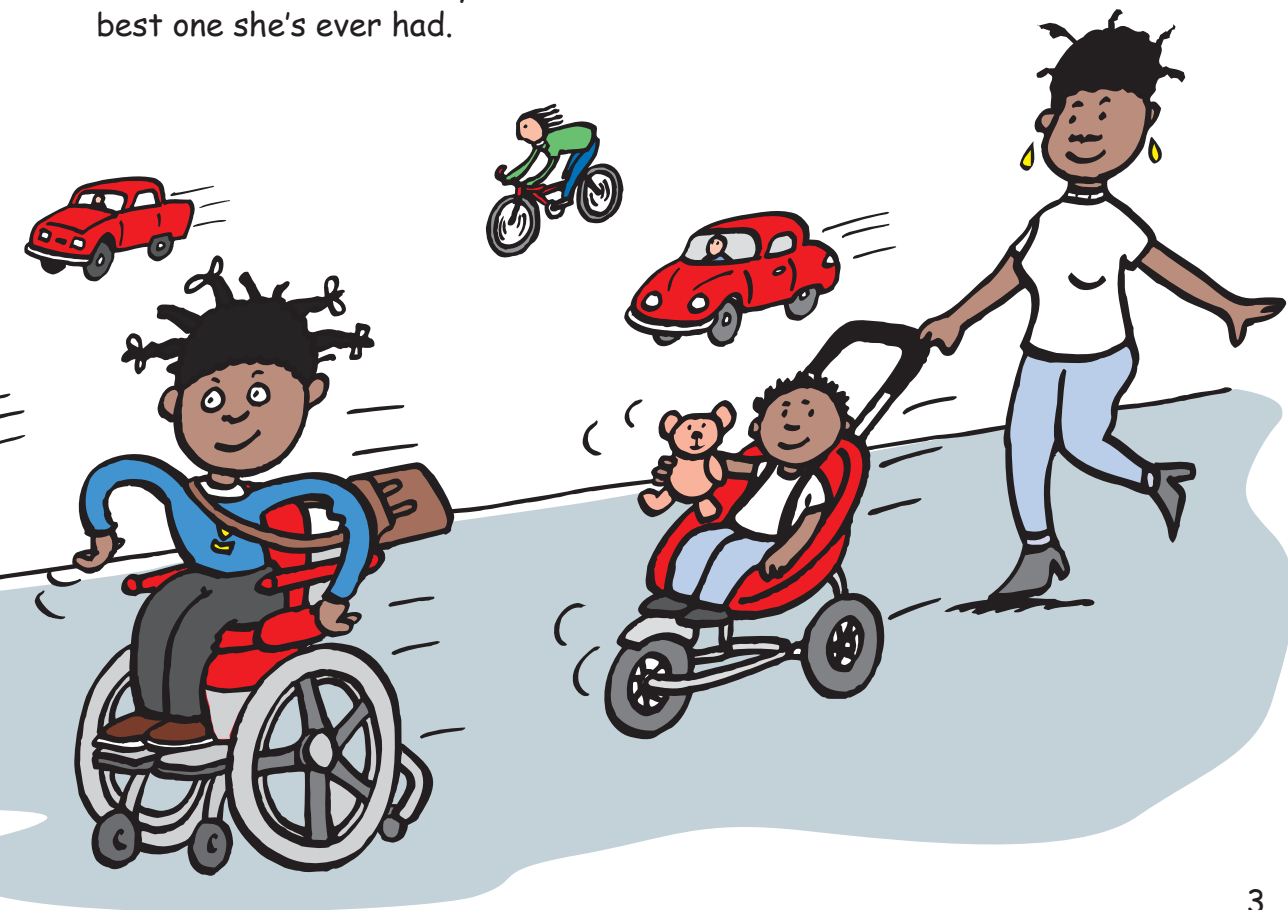


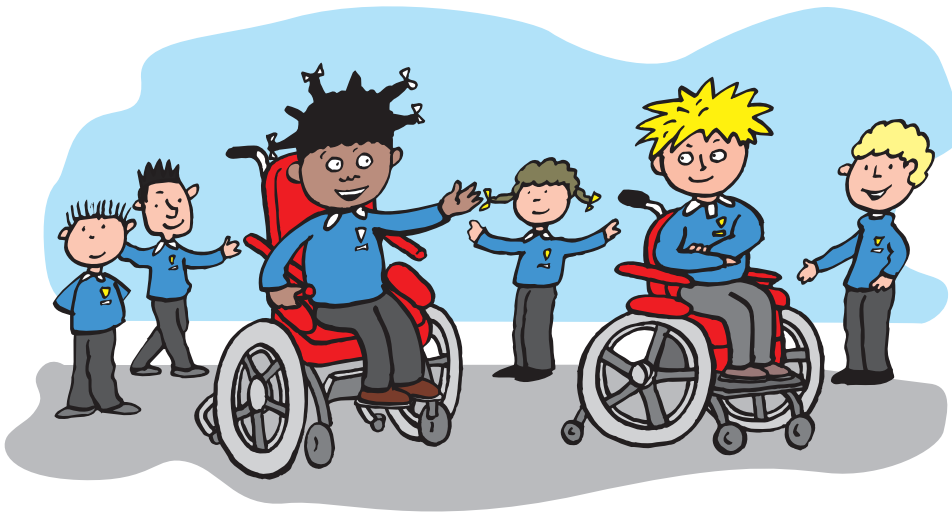
Millie has learned to go fast in her wheelchair.  
"Watch me" she shouts as she goes past the swings.



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

Millie loves her new shiny red wheelchair: it's the  
best one she's ever had.





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

Her bladder and bowels do not work properly either.

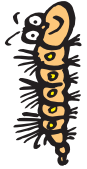
Millie has been going to school for some time now. Before she went to school, she learned how to drain the urine from her bladder using a catheter. Now she stays dry at school and this makes Millie happy.

Sometimes though, Millie becomes upset because her bowels are harder for her to manage.

Her bowel gets backed up with poop, which makes her feel tired and yucky. Then liquid poop leaks out and she has to wear a diaper. Sometimes - without her knowing - it all comes out like a big explosion!



When this happens at school Millie is embarrassed and her teacher has to take her to the school nurse and clean her up.



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

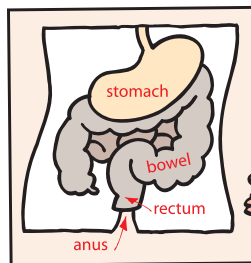
And she really really dislikes wearing a diaper.

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

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



The nurse explains to Millie 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.



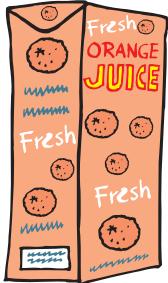
Millie learns that it is important to get onto a bowel program. This will help Millie have more regular and less unexpected poop! Millie's Mom gets some material from the nurse about how to keep her poop soft so that it will come out easier.

Millie will need to take medicine to help her have regular poops and to keep it soft.





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

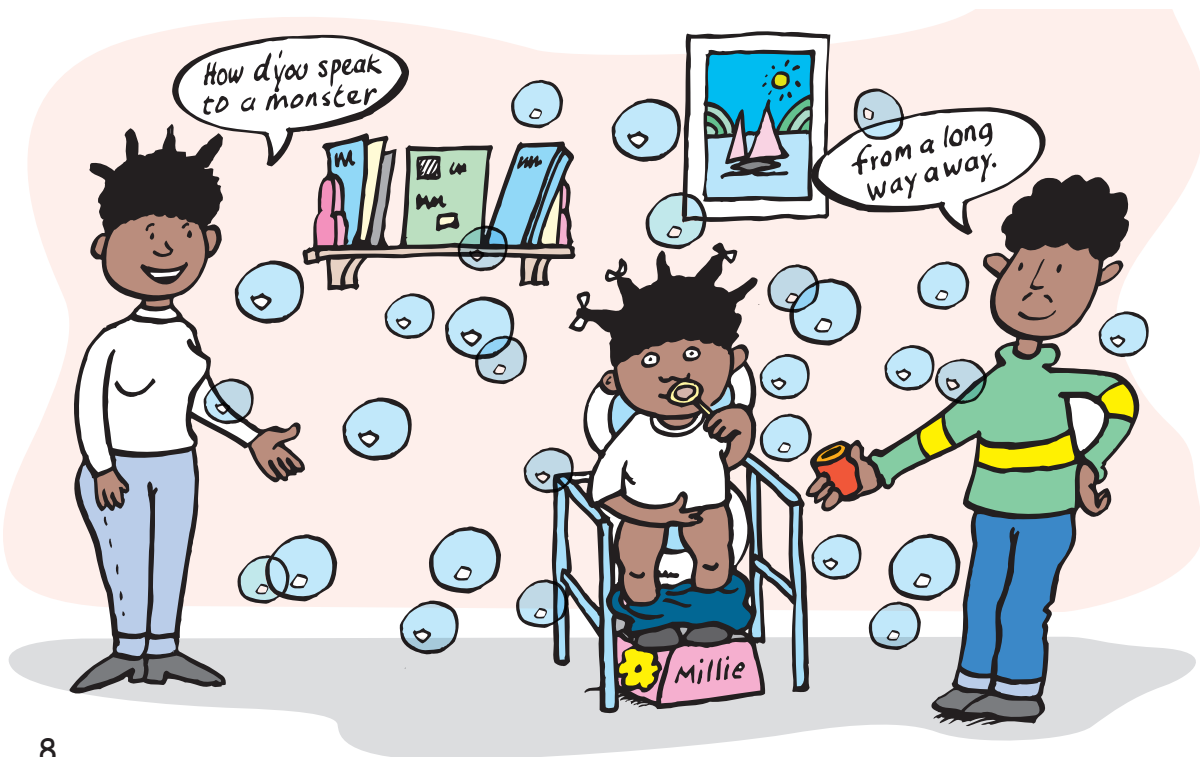


Millie feels proud she remembers she has to drink a lot as well, as this also helps to keep her poop soft. Her favorite drink is fresh orange juice.



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

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



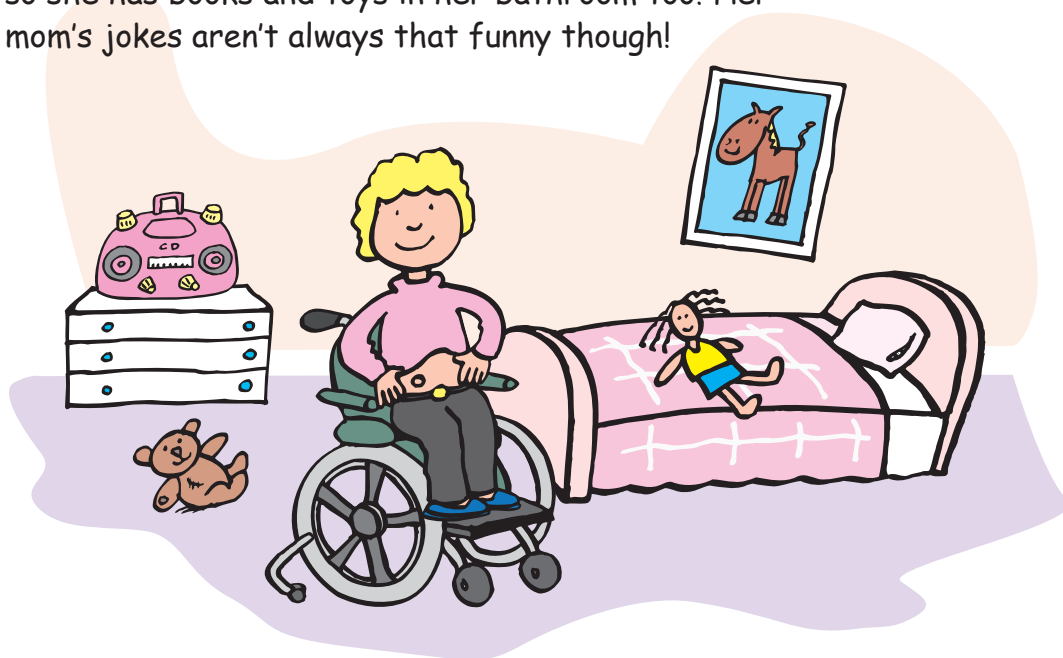
Millie's dad calls the toilet her throne because it has handles on the side to keep her from falling off, a special soft seat so her bottom doesn't get sore, and a little footstool so her feet don't dangle. She is especially proud of her stool as she helped Mom paint it.

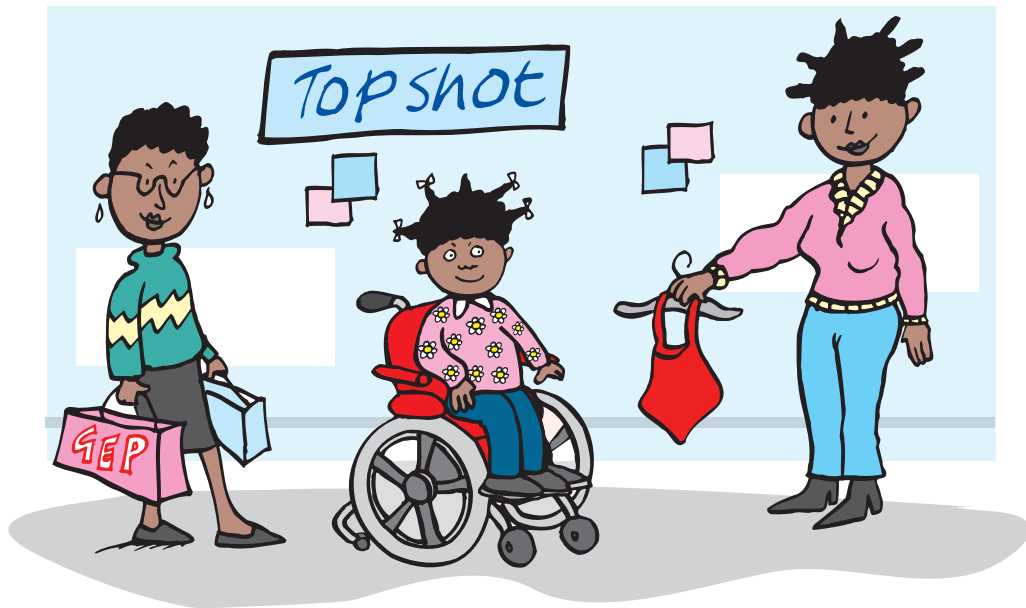


Millie's friend Sophie also has spina bifida. Sophie has had an operation called an A.C.E. to help her with the bowel program. The doctor at the hospital thought this would work better for Sophie. She has a little opening (called a stoma) on her skin, which has a tunnel to her bowel.



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





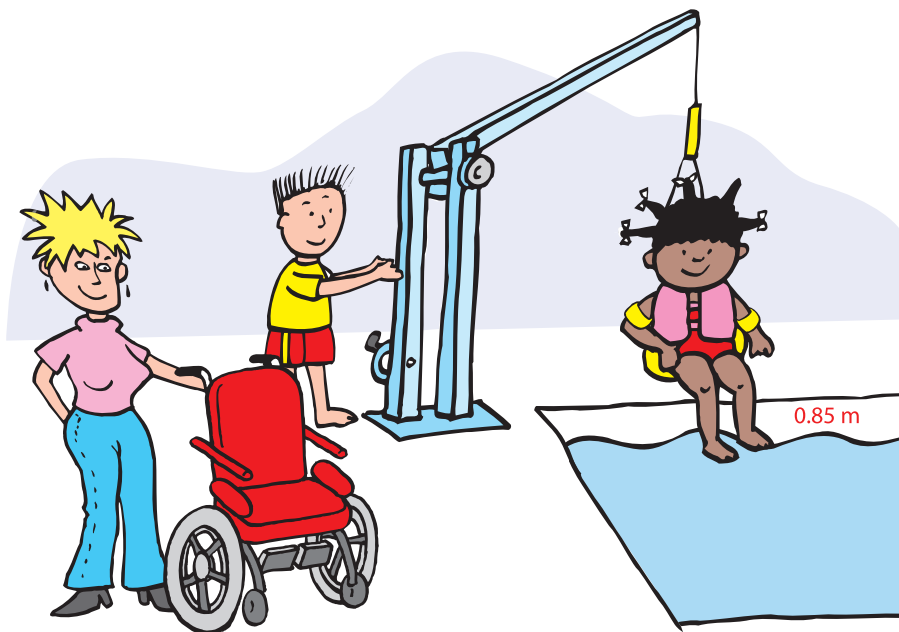
Look at Millie!

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

She and her mom and grandma have been shopping for new clothes. They buy underwear with flowers on them and really cool jeans. Millie also got a new swim suit - bright red like her wheelchair. Millie thinks it is great!

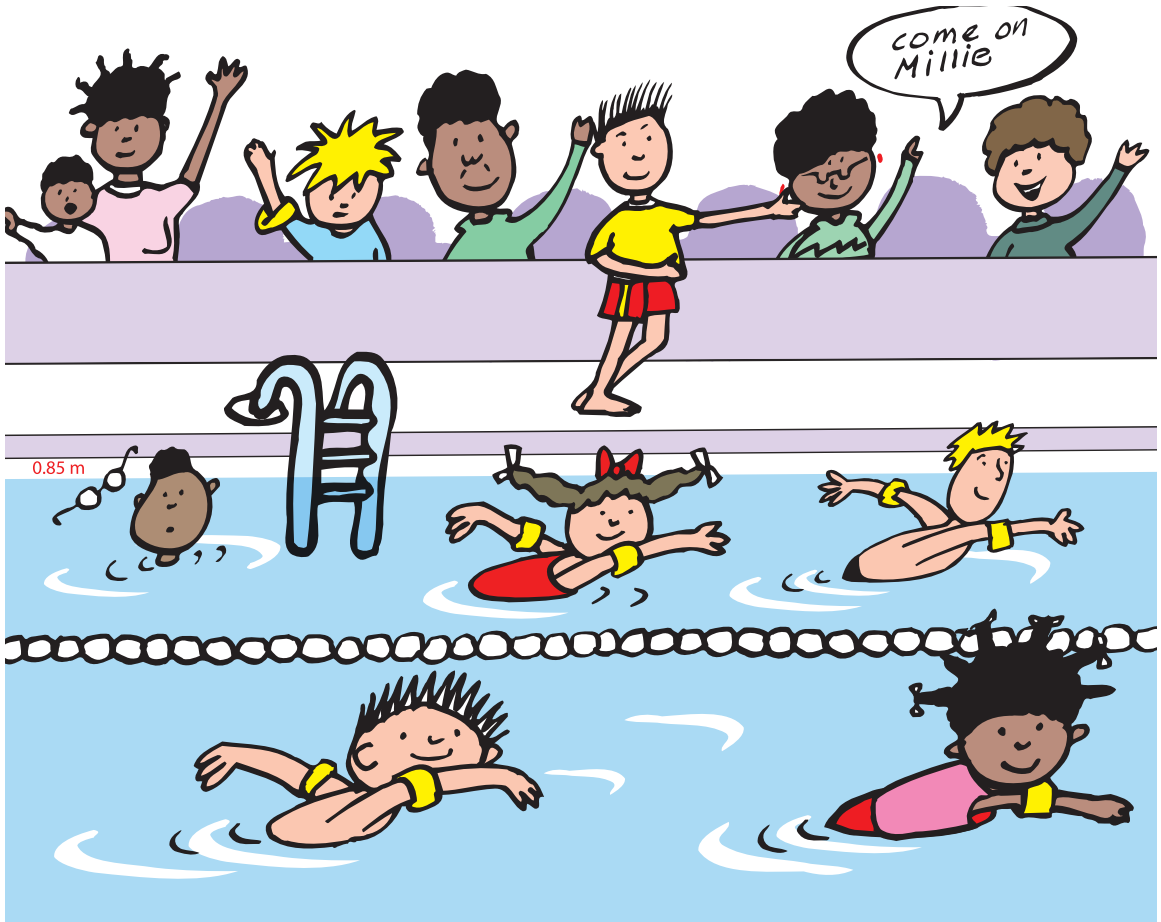
Millie decides to join the swim team at school. A few weeks later, her mom, dad and Peter are at the swimming pool to watch the swim meet.

Peter thinks Millie looks great in her new swimsuit. The coach helps Millie into the pool with a special hoist so she can get ready for her race.



The whistle blows to start the race! Millie swims as fast as she can!

**"Come on Millie,"** shouts her grandma - then **"Hooray, Hooray"** as Millie wins the race!



Millie is so proud of herself. She has worked so hard to make sure she is no longer wet or having accidents.



And now she has her **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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**Hollister Incorporated**  
2000 Hollister Drive  
Libertyville, Illinois 60048 USA  
1.800.323.4060

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**Hollister Limited**  
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Aurora, Ontario L4G 1G3  
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