**At the Amusement Park (a story about ‘fun to feel scared’ and ‘calming down’)**

Thembi woke up very early and realised this was the day she was going to visit the Amusement Park.

It was fun from the first moment they arrived at the park. There were many families and lots of activities for the children. Some children were having their faces painted, others were watching the magician or playing on the rides or the water slides.

Dad wanted to go on the roller coaster ride and Thembi wanted to go too. When it was time to go through the gate, Thembi got scared and wasn’t sure she still wanted to go. Dad put his arm around Thembi and said “you don’t have to go Thembi, you can stay with mum if you like”. “But dad, I **want** to go … are you sure we will be okay?” “Oh yes Thembi, we will be okay” said dad “but remember, it is your choice to go”. Thembi gave dad a nod and said “okay, let’s go”.

It was so scary and also fun at the same time. Thembi screamed with fright at times and with delight at other times. When the ride ended, it was time to have their picnic lunch under the big tree. Thembi had her sandwich and asked if she could go for a short walk to check out the face painting. That’s when she saw the baby farm animals to her left and decided to have a quick look.

Oh, the little baby lambs were so cute and Thembi was given a turn to feed one of the lambs with a bottle. The cutest of all were the little chickens, so soft and small. She wandered around for a while longer and when she turned to go back to her parents, she couldn’t see them anymore.

Thembi panicked … she became aware of her hands shaking as she realised she had gone too far and couldn’t remember which way to walk back to her parents. She could feel how cold her hands were and her throat felt dry and sore. Her heart was going boom, boom, boom … really fast! She couldn’t think very clearly at all and a few tears trickled down her face.

Thembi remembered learning that, if ever she had her early warning signs and felt unsafe, she had to calm her body down, by breathing slowly. She closed her eyes for a moment and took three deep breaths. She could feel her body calming down. There were many people and she decided to ask the lady standing next to her. The kind lady looked at her and said “come on, I will help you and together we can find your parents”. They walked for a few minutes until Thembi saw her parents still eating lunch under the big tree.

“Mum, dad … I couldn’t see you anywhere” yelled Thembi and ran to her parents. “I was so scared and had my early warning signs and then I asked someone to help me find you again”. Dad thanked the lady for helping me and gave me a big hug. Thembi felt safe again and stayed close to her parents for the rest of the afternoon.

Debrief:

When did Thembi feel safe? (walking with her parents, sitting down having lunch).

When did she feel unsafe? (when she realised she was lost).

Can you remember what Early Warning Signs she had? (shaking hands, her throat was dry and sore, and her heart was beating like a drum).

Did she have choice walking around? (yes, she had choice in the beginning, it was fun feeding the little lambs).

Was she in control of the situation? (in the beginning she was in control because she thought she could go back to her parents any time she wanted to).

Was she still in control of the situation when she realised she was lost? (no, because she couldn’t find her way back to her parents).

What did Thembi do once she realised she was feeling unsafe (no choice, no control)? (she calmed her body to think clearly and most importantly, she asked an adult for help.