**Malta example**

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Problem-solving is complex, and many skills are needed. It involves controlling strong feelings, and being able to think about a problem and things that are upsetting. For little children, the main aims are to recognize what they feel and where in the body they feel it. They also need to be able to put their feelings into words. Children are helped by learning and practicing “calming-down” strategies to manage or control their feelings. The older the children get, the more the teacher can introduce different aspects of problem-solving strategies. Basically, the strengths we want to build are recognizing and labeling feelings, being able to calm down, and in the longer run using problem-solving strategies to think about and to resolve the conflicts that may arise. Problem-solving exercises can be introduced just before children leave kindergarten, but maybe it is better to wait until they start school. There are some optional problem-solving exercises, which are listed below.

**Molly the Mouse**

For the kindergarten children, we will use stories about a mouse called Molly, who lives on a farm in a barn. The farm is run by a family with two children: Mummy Bridget, Daddy John, and the children Joseph and Lindy. Molly lives with her parents and siblings. There is a cat on the farm, and the mouse family is very careful not to get eaten by the cat. For the smaller children, basic feelings, such as anger, sadness, happiness and worry, provide foundations for the stories. For older children, more complex feelings are introduced, such as indifference, surprise, and suspicion Teachers are advised to make sure that they use strategies to enhance positive behavior and a positive climate, and to avoid coercive strategies. It is also suggested that the teachers use a little toy mouse or a finger doll when they talk about Molly.

Kindergarten teachers in Sweden often use a soft mouse toy, which they can get in department stores for example IKEA, and then bring Molly out when it is time to talk about her. The children get really excited when Molly is about to come out. Sometimes, the teachers let the children have Molly for a day or two in their own homes. Then, Molly is “adopted” by a child for a little while.

The following activities are graded as follows: I. Basic, II. Intermediate, III. Advanced

Use the mouse toy or finger doll to introduce the feeling. You can also have a big piece of paper or plastic figure in the shape of a child. The children or the teacher can draw on the figure, or just show where the feeling is on the body.

**ANGER**

1. **Basic**

Read the story. It is an autumn morning. Molly has gone into the main house to see if she can find something to eat. The farm family are up and about, so Molly is sneaking about so as not to be seen. Mummy Bridget is in the kitchen preparing breakfast. She is putting out plates for the children. To Molly’s delight, some bread crumbs fall onto the floor, and she quickly nibbles at them. And look, there under the cupboard, she finds a tasty bit of cheese, which she is enjoying, when she hears a terrible noise. Lindy is screaming at the top of her voice, saying she is so ANGRY because somebody has hidden her trousers. “WHERE ARE MY TROUSERS?” Lindy shouts. “I WANT TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE, NOW!” Calm down, says Mummy, and asks her what trousers are missing. Lindy stamps one foot on the floor, and shouts “I AM SO ANGRY I CANNOT THINK!” Molly cringes, and hides behind the cupboard; she is shaking; she is so frightened by Lindy’s anger. Daddy is coming into the kitchen with a pair of trousers in his hand, and says: “I found these in the bathroom; they are far too small for me so I wonder whose they are.” Lindy blushes and says: “They’re mine”. Molly scurries away to the barn, and sees that her sister has borrowed her hat, immediately she screams: “GIVE ME MY HAT! Her sister doesn’t seem to hear what Molly is saying, so Molly runs up to her, tears the hat from her and screams “IT’S MINE!” The sister looks surprised at Molly and says: “But you said I could borrow it.” Molly instantly remembers that she has promised to lend the hat to her sister. Molly feels ashamed and apologizes. Molly is wondering whether anger can spread from one person to another. She had become just as angry as Lindy was earlier.

Talk to the children about being angry. Do they think anger is contagious? Show the children what you look like when you are angry. Let them show you what they look like when they are angry. It is good if they can use mirrors. Where in the body do they feel anger? (Let them pretend they are angry then let them relax. This may help them to feel the difference in their own bodies.) Talk to the children about how you sound when you are angry. Show them yourself, and then let the children walk around in the room and pretend to be angry. They can say “I’m angry”, and both look and sound angry. Before you end the activity, it is important to get the children to relax. They can take a few deep breaths, and also lie down and listen to soft, relaxing music until they are relaxed.

1. **Intermediate**

Read the story. Talk about how angry Molly is. Tell the children about a time when you were angry, or when one of your children was angry. Ask the children if they have been angry. Let the children paint the feeling of anger. They can use finger paint. Ask them what colours they associate with feeling angry. Then, let the children choose whatever colour they want, being careful not to show them what colours we normally associate with anger. Also, encourage them to try to show they are angry in the *way* they paint. Pin the angry paintings onto a wall. You can record what they do with a digital camera. Let each child show what they look like when they are angry, and put each photo next to their painting. Sing a song about being angry; you can either find a song, or sing a song they know, in an angry manner. End the activity by getting the children to feeling relaxed and calm. Let all the children lie on their backs. Play soft, relaxing music.

1. **Advanced**

Show the children he following, either by getting Molly to do it or telling the children.

Molly is playing with her friends; they are building things with wooden blocks, and are having fun. Two other mouse children are playing tag, and one of them falls onto the building that Molly and her friends have made. All the bits fly over the floor. Molly gets mad, and shouts “WHAT ARE YOU DOING? LOOK WHAT YOU’VE DONE; YOU’VE RUINED EVERYTHING WE BUILT.”

Stop telling the story, and ask what Molly’s feelings are. Where does she feel it? Let the children point to their bodies or show the places on a doll. What does she look like when she is angry? (Get them to show it). How do they think the other mice children feel? What can Molly do now? (Make sure that one option is to calm down).

Talk to the children about being angry. Getting angry is normal, but you cannot let the feeling show in any manner. Sometimes, it is good to calm down before telling somebody about how angry you are. So, what can you do when you are so angry that you can scarcely breathe? (Take a few breaths, go somewhere else, calm down, etc. )

Continue by showing how, when Molly is angry, she sits down, takes a few breaths, and then thinks aloud: “I get so angry when they run into what I have built because it feels like they don’t care about what I am doing. I want them to see where I am when I’m playing. I want to think that they care about me. I think I’ll say something to them. Children, can you help me with what I can say to the others?”

Get the children to give Molly some suggestions. After they have given their suggestions, let them say: “I get angry when … I want you to …” in a calm voice (let all the children try). This is a start on teaching them “I” messages.

Write an angry poem with the children. Let each line of the poem start with “I get angry when … .” Get all the children to come up with suggestions.

End the exercise with a massage story (shown at the end of this document). The teacher reads the story, and shows the children how to massage each other. The story has to be read twice, so that all the children get a massage.

Here is an optional extra exercise to do with the children:

Let Molly get very ANGRY about something, and interview her about the feelings she has. Ask her what it feels like, and where in the body she feels it. Ask her for how long she normally is angry. Ask her about other things that make her angry, and also ask her if she has got any tricks to stop her being angry. Molly has one trick, which is to shut her eyes and to take three deep breaths; after her last breath, she says “I’m calm”. Molly wants to teach all the children to calm down, so she asks them to do what she does. Molly practices with the children, getting them to do what she does, and then she asks the teacher to put on some “calming” music. She and the children listen to the music. Before Molly goes away, she encourages the children to practice breathing in this way when they want to calm down or feel calm.

**SADNESS**

Molly is sad when the exercise starts. She sobs, and says that one of her friends has been run over by a car. My friend was on his way home from the woods, and when he was about to dart across the road, a car drove over him. Molly is so sad. The teacher comforts Molly, and Molly calms down. The teacher lets Molly curl up in her arms and Molly falls asleep.

1. **Basic**

Ask the children what you look like when you are sad. Let them show you what they look like when they are sad. Let them move around, and show with their whole body that they are sad. Document the exercise with a digital camera. Read a sad story and/or sing a sad song.

Let Molly say a few sentences in a normal voice. Then she should say something in a sad voice. Can the children hear the difference between Molly’s different tones of voice? How do they think she feels? Say more sentences in a normal voice and in a sad voice. Get the children to say something in a normal voice; then, they say something in a sad voice. Let Molly ask the children what their faces look like when they are sad: “What does your body look like”? “Where do you feel it in your body when you’re sad?”

Have a large paper doll with you, so that the children can draw where on the body the sad feeling is. Molly talks to the children about how sorry she is that her friend has been run over. She misses her friend a lot and often cries when she thinks of him. Molly shows with her entire body how sorry she is.

1. **Intermediate**

Have finger paints ready, and get the children to paint pictures, sad pictures. Document the exercise with a digital camera. End by letting Molly say that she helps herself by taking deep breaths, so as not be so sad all the time. The children can listen to soft music while they are practicing their deep breaths.

1. **Advanced**

Let Molly ask the children if they have ever been teased: What did they feel? Were some of them sad? What can you do when you feel sad? What can you do when someone else is sad? How can you be comforted? What can you do if you want to comfort someone else?

Make up a sad story with the children. It may consist of things the children are sad about, or you can make up a wholly new story. Read the sad story, and let the children show with their bodies and faces that they are sad. Document everything with a digital camera.

Talk about different things children get sad about. Then, do short mime exercises (i.e., a silent theatre) about the things that make them sad; the other children have to guess what it is that makes them sad.

End by letting the children comfort each other, so that they all feel good.

**FEAR**

Today, Molly is going to town! Daddy is going to meet some other mice in the city. They are going to discuss what to do to secure their nests against cats and other animals, and also to learn how to tell the difference between food and rat poison. Molly is bouncing up and down next to Daddy; she is so excited about everything she will see. She has never been to the city before. It is quite a long way from her town, so they bring a packed lunch. Molly is darting back and forth. Daddy does not really see what she is doing, and all of a sudden he hears a roaring sound. Molly is lying under a car. Daddy yells “NO!”

After the car has driven past, Molly is still lying on the ground. She was so lucky; the car ran her down, but did not run over her. She managed to stay between the wheels. Molly is petrified with fear; she knows that you can be killed by cars. Daddy shouts at her, but she cannot move. Daddy runs up and pulls her off the road. Molly is still completely numb; she cannot do anything. Daddy takes her in his arms and hugs her. After a while, Molly feels how the warmth flows from her father to her, and her fear gradually disappears. She has to learn that she cannot run out into the road because dangerous cars may appear, and there are even more cars in the city. The rest of the day, Molly holds her father´s hand.

1. **Basic**

Ask the children to show what they think Molly looked like when she was paralyzed with fear. Ask them to show it with their whole body. They can walk around the room, and act as if they are rigid with fear. Have they ever been rigid with fear? How do they think Molly felt when warmth flowed from her Daddy? Where did it flow to?

1. **Intermediate**

Pose this question to the children: “If someone around you is afraid, do you also get frightened?” Are emotions contagious? Play “infectious tag”. That is, one child starts to get frightened, and then tries to tag somebody else, who also gets scared and tries to tag somebody else, and so on. End the exercise by making sure that calmness is spread to all the children.

1. **Advanced**

Ask the children how they can get help when they are afraid? What will make them calm? Who will help them? Did they know that it spreads in this way? Let the children show that they are afraid (they can stand like frightened statues); then, walk up to them, and hold them so that they can feel the warmth flowing. As soon as the child feels the warmth flow, they let go of their statue and become normal again. If there is time, half of the group of children can act as frightened statues, and the other half can go up to them and let warmth flow to their friends. Get them to change roles. Document what happens, preferably with a digital camera. Make up a “frightened story” together, and end it with how to calm down.

**SHYNESS AND INSECURITY**

Today, there’s a lot of action in the mouse nest. The whole family is going on vacation. They are taking a boat down the river to visit a mole family in Mole Country. Moles are like mice, but a bit larger. Daddy mouse met a mole on his last trip and they got along very well. Mummy and Daddy are trying to prepare their children for the visit by explaining that Mole Country is a bit different. Moles talk in a different way from mice, and they do things differently. Everyone in the mouse family helps to pack, and they sing when they go to the boat. Mummy is steering the boat and making sure that they come right down the river. Daddy sits and sings with the children. The sun is shining, and it is a nice day. Everyone is in good spirits, and curious about Mole Country. Now Mummy says they will dock the boat on the beach, since they are already in Mole Country. They all jump ashore. On the path in front of them, is the mole family. The mole family walks up to them and the moles press their noses against the mice’s noses. That is how you greet each other in Mole Country. Molly is insecure; she does not know how to do things in Mole Country. She hides behind Daddy. Daddy tries to push her out to join the others, but she holds on to Daddy’s pants. She refuses to look at the mole children, and feels she would just like to get out of there. Daddy picks her up and says: “I do believe that I have a shy little girl.” Molly curls up in his arms, and does not want anyone to look at her. When the whole week has passed, Molly plays with the mole children and thinks it will be a bit sad to go home; it has been so exciting to do things differently. When they are about to part, Molly is the first to press her nose against a mole’s nose. When they wave goodbye, everybody laughs. This is how moles show that they have enjoyed a visit. Molly really likes this way of saying goodbye; it makes you want to come back again.

1. **Basic**

Ask the children if they have been in a few different surroundings? How do they find it? Do they get shy and shy sometimes? How does it feel? Where do they feel it? What do they do then?

1. **Intermediate**

Ask the children if they have been shy at any point. Where in the body do they feel that they are shy? Let them show you on a large paper doll (get them draw on the doll where they feel shyness) what can you do when you are shy? How can you help somebody else who is shy?

What are the children insecure about? Shy about? Are you always shy when you are insecure or insecure when you are shy? Write down what they say. Have they ever blushed? How do they feel when everybody else is looking at them? Let the children show with their body that they are shy. Get them to say things in a shy manner.

1. **Advanced**

Sometimes we arere both shy and curious. Can you have more than one feeling at the same time? What might they be? Can feelings change? Maybe you are shy and then become happy, or sad and then become happy. Let the children give examples. Then help them by showing that you can have two feelings at the same time, and also that feelings can change. Maybe you can make a cartoon together.

**SURPRISE**

Molly longs for her birthday, which is tomorrow, and mice’s birthdays are celebrated in a very special way. The day before, all the presents are put on display, so that everyone can see the parcels. You must not touch the parcels, just look at them. When the birthday actually arrives, somebody has hidden the parcels, and you have to look for them. All the parcels are in the same place. Molly has been sneaking around her parcels. She is so curious that she can almost burst. She wants to hold them and lift them and feel them, but she is not allowed. When no one is looking she picks up a parcel and shakes it. She cannot hear anything, and the only thing she knows is that the parcel is heavy. She quickly puts it down so no one will notice that she has touched it. When she goes to bed that night, she does not want to fall asleep. She wants to try to see where the others are hiding the presents. She pretends to sleep, but she does not sleep. She hears how Mummy, Daddy and her sister are talking about where to hide the parcels, and Molly thinks she will certainly find out where they decide to hide them. But before she knows it, she is asleep, and when she wakes up, it is morning. “Oh no, now I do not know where the presents are!” She asks her sister, but gets no answer. Daddy says he knows where the presents are, and he gives Molly a clue. He says: “If you brush your teeth really carefully, you are very close.” Molly runs to the cup they have as a sink, and behind it are her presents. Now she is really curious, but since she is allowed to open the presents now, she thinks it is fun to do it slowly. Now, all the others are curious about what she will think, and Molly enjoys keeping them dangling. When she opens the presents, she is very happy, because she thinks she got such nice things. She got nice ear flaps to wear when it is cold, and a basket of her own to collect nuts and berries in. Mom has made a beautiful bed of dried orange peel, and her sister has found a very nice fabric to make a bedcover of. Molly had asked for her favorite dish, which is cheese and nut pie. In the evening, when Molly is about to go to bed, everyone else in the family sit around her. She is so happy and grateful. Now, she is not curious about her presents anymore, but she is curious about what tomorrow has got to offer.

1. **Basic**

Ask the children if they have ever been curious. What do they look like when they are curious? Get the children to show you what they look like when they are curious; they can walk around the room and look curious. Ask the children what they are curious about today: Tell them what you are curious about. End by talking about something you want to find out about during the day.

1. **Intermediate**

Play curious, walk around checking the place out, and see whether you find something new. Note down what the children find when they are curious. Gather the children together, and write a “curious poem together”. Use what you have noted down when you write the poem.

1. **Advanced**

Draw all the things that children are curious about. (You can also take a photograph, paint a picture, or cut out pictures) This may turn out to be the group’s “curious painting”.

**MISCHIEVOUSNESS AND NAUGHTINESS**

One morning, Molly wakes up and feels in a mischievous mood. “Oh what fun it would be to play around a little,” she thought. She did not play around with Mummy or Daddy because they had so much to do, and when they are so busy, they easily get angry. When Molly was thinking about how she could be mischievous, she started thinking about the cat. Surely, it would be fun to tease the cat! But how do you tease a cat? Molly sat and thought, and she remembered that cats like to chase things. She tied a toy mouse onto a string. She ran out on the barn floor, and positioned the toy mouse so that the cat could see it. She lay inside a mouse hole and waited. She had to wait a while before the cat arrived. She was pretty bored, and was almost falling asleep, when she heard how something came through the barn door. Yes, there was the big domestic cat. The cat saw the mouse directly, and crept slowly forward. Just as it was preparing to jump and take the mouse, Molly pulled the string so that the mouse moved. The cat looked surprised, licked his paws and moved them over his ears, and looked at the mouse again. The cat pretended that it did not see the mouse, but it was watching it all the time. Molly tugged the string lightly so that the toy mouse moved; the cat immediately sat up, and began to creep towards the mouse. The cat was trying to stretch out a paw and take the mouse, but Molly snatched it away; the cat tried again, but Molly pulled it away. The cat was getting a bit angry, and took a giant leap at the mouse but Molly pulled the string to pretend that the mouse went into the mouse hole. The cat growled and lay down in front of the mouse hole, trying to see what was there. Molly was lying on the floor, and laughed until her stomach cramped. Just imagine! She had tricked the cat, and the cat looked crestfallen. Molly’s legs went up and down as she laughed; she had not had such fun in a long time. She thought that she must find more mischievous things to do. This was so much fun.

1. **Basic**

Ask the children if they have ever been mischievous or naughty. What kind of things have they done? What things do they think are funny? Paint a picture, where you write down the children’s favorite mischievous things.

1. **Intermediate**

Where in your body do you feel mischievous? What do you look like when you are naughty? Let the children show you, and also look at themselves in a mirror. Do a “mischievous pantomime”.

1. **Advanced**

Ask the children if they have found that being naughty can turn into something else, such as being dangerous, someone getting upset or sad, or something getting broken. If a naughty thing turns into something you do not want, what can you do? Let the children make a mini play on this theme.

**SURLINESS**

Molly will go swimming today. It will be very exciting; she thinks it is fun to go down the slide at the baths. She will go with another family. She is in a hurry now, and fills her backpack with a swimsuit and goggles. She cannot find her bathing suit. She is searching and searching. Finally, she gives up and asks her mother, but she does not know where it is. She asks her sister, who says that she borrowed it when she was at the swimming baths. When Molly asks where it is now, her sister says, a little ashamed: “It’s still in the carrier bag.” Molly gets the bag, and her swimsuit is there. It does not smell good and she gets really, really mad at her sister. She sits down and looks really grumpy. “Don’t just sit here in a sourly mood” says Mummy. “Let’s just rinse the swimsuit, and it won’t smell so bad“ “But I want a dry swimsuit to take with me,” says Molly. “You have to choose,” says mom: “Either a wet swimsuit or none at all.” Molly agrees reluctantly to take the wet swimsuit. She mutters to herself when walking away in a surly manner.

1. **Basic**

Ask the children if they have ever been surly. What do you look like when you are surly? What do you sound like when you are surly? Let them walk around the room, and look and sound surly. Use a digital camera to document them.

1. **Intermediate**

How do children show that they are surly? How long does the feeling last? Who decides how long they will be surly? Do they have any tricks not to be surly anymore? Play “surly tag”, where half the group is surly statues, while the other half removes the surly feeling by playing tag. When surly ones are tagged, they get happy and start to laugh

1. **Advanced**

Molly is thinking about being surly. Why do you get in a surly mood? Is the surly mood infectious? Is the surly feeling a good one? Can you do anything about being surly? Make a mini-play, where the children are surly, and then get out of the mood. Use a digital camera to document what goes on.

**Problem-solving and handling strong emotions**

When the children are 6 to 7 years-old, they can use a traffic light as a symbol for problem-solving and handling strong emotions. They are presented with fictitious situations, but can also use the symbol when they have a real problem or conflict.

*The red light* symbolizes stopping and calming down. It is explained to the children that, just like a car driving against a red light, they can hurt themselves or others unless they calm down before they act. For example, a child is upset because he or she wants to play with somebody, but that child wants to play with somebody else. The child may get very upset and want to get into a fight. Instead, the child is encouraged to calm down using a calming-down technique, e.g. by taking three deep breaths. One or more sessions could be spent going through all the different kinds of calming-down techniques the children, and the adults around them, are aware of.

*The yellow light* symbolizes thinking about possible solutions to the problem, and also about the consequences of different solutions. The child is encouraged to consider what they want, what their goal is in the situation, and how to achieve it. In this example, it would be “I want to play with “that other child”. Then, the child is encouraged to think about possible solutions. Here, it is important to look at all solutions, not just the “right” ones. Both children and adults choose all kinds of solutions in real life, and they are not always the best ones! A solution might be: “Give him some sweets”, “Hit him”, “Ask if they can play later”, or “Get help from an adult”. The next step is to look at what consequences each solution might have. For example, if you give him some sweets now, you may always have to do so, or, if you are lucky, he may give you some sweets next time. The important thing here is for the teacher not to moralize. What we want to teach the children is that they have a choice, and that there are consequences of what they choose. In the end, this helps to empower the children. The teacher should also make sure that there are as many solutions as possible.

*The green light* stands for “Go”. Try out your best solution. If it does not work, try one of the other options you have.

As a teacher, you have to make sure that you use this model whenever there is a problem or a conflict. In that way, the children will learn to apply the model themselves.

For this, the children have to apply cognitive skills. For the model really to work, it is important for them to be able to recognize their feelings and put them into words. It is also important that they know what they are feeling at any given moment, and are aware that feelings can change.

**Massage story 1: The playground**

The teacher reads the story, showing the children how to massage each other at the same time. Here, the massage instructions are in brackets.

Sam and Lucy are going to a playground, where they expect to have a lot of fun.

(“Walk”, with your index and long finger over your back.)

When they get to the playground, they see lots of fun things. Neither Sam nor Lucy knows where to start, so they go from one thing to the next

(The same movement as before but let your fingers “run” down your back.)

“Look at those swings,” the children say. They sit on them and start to swing, first carefully but, after a while, in a robust manner.

(Put your palms in the middle of the back and let them “swing” in small movements over the back. Make the movements wider until they swing over the whole back, from the bottom of the back up to the neck.)

“Look, there’s a slide over there,” Lucy says. “Let’s slide down,” she says. “Hey, this is fast and fun!” They go on the slide several times.

(Start at the bottom of the back, and walk with your index and long fingers on each side of the spine. When you are at the top, slide down with your hands.)

There is also a sandpit in the playground. After sliding, the children go into the sand. Their legs are a bit tired now.

(“Walk” with heavy palms upwards and outwards over the back and shoulders.)

They find buckets and spades in the sand pit: “Let’s make a castle,” says Sam; “Yes,” says Lucy, and they start digging.

(Use your fist and “screw” carefully downwards on the back)

When their castle is finished, they meticulously pat the sand around the castle with their spades to make it look really nice

(Hold your hand so that the thumb is pointing upwards into the air and the little finger is resting on the back. Now move the hands I a relaxed way up and down on the back in a classical massage way, flexing it from the wrist)

The sun is shining on their castle and both Sam and Lucy are proud when they suddenly hear mother calling for them to say lunch is ready. When they are on their way home they feel the sun on their backs.

(Start at the bottom of the back and move your hands upwards and out on the shoulders and down again.)

**Massage story 2: The bears**

The teacher reads the story, showing the children how to massage each other at the same time. Here, the massage instructions are in brackets.

There is a bear family living deep in the forest: Mummy Bear, Daddy Bear, and Rufus the Baby Bear.

The bears have just woken up after long winter hibernation. Before they get up, they stretch their bodies.

(Place the palm of one hand on the back, and make long dashing movements with the other hand on the back)

The bear family will now go out to restock their food supply. First goes Daddy Bear.

(Lock your wrists and go heavily upwards along the spine. Then, let the palm slide down again.)

Next Mummy Bear.

(“Walk” a little more lightly with your wrists, up and down the spine)

And last comes Rufus, the Baby Bear.

(Use your wrists to make small light pressure along the spine, and then let your palm slide down again)

It was a beautiful and warm spring day. The sun was shining, and the birds chirping.

(Make a circular motion with one hand and draw sunbeams with the other.

After the bears had walked around for a while, they came to a little lake. Little Rufus thought it looked so nice that he decided to take his first spring dip. He leaped in, and there were large ripples.

(Make small circular movements with your fingertips over the back.)

Mummy and Daddy Bear were laughing together, but Rufus wanted to get out of the water and his father came to lift the little bear.

(Grasp the shoulder muscle, lift, and then gently release.)

Rufus’’ fur was so wet that his mother had to get some soft moss to dry him.

(Massage with your fingertips around the uppermost vertebrae in the neck. Continue with small movements down along the spine, and then let your palms slide up towards the shoulders.)

The family continued their walk and found a lot of nice nuts that they put into their backpack.

(Use the pincer grasp, moving across the back.)

To access the good roots below ground, every one helped to chop up the roots with bear paws.

(Hold your hand upright with the little finger down and chop down the spine upward and outward)

It was getting late afternoon and the backpack was now full of the goodies so the family went back home to their nest.

First goes Daddy bear.

(Join wrists and go heavy upward along the spine. Then let the palm slide down again.)

Then came Mother Bear

(Go a bit lighter with wrists up and down the spine)

And last came Rufus, the little bear

(Use your wrists and make light pressure along the spine and then let your palm slide down again.)

 This evening it was a tired and happy little bear that went to bed after his first spring walk.

(Move your hands as if they followed the outline of a heart.)