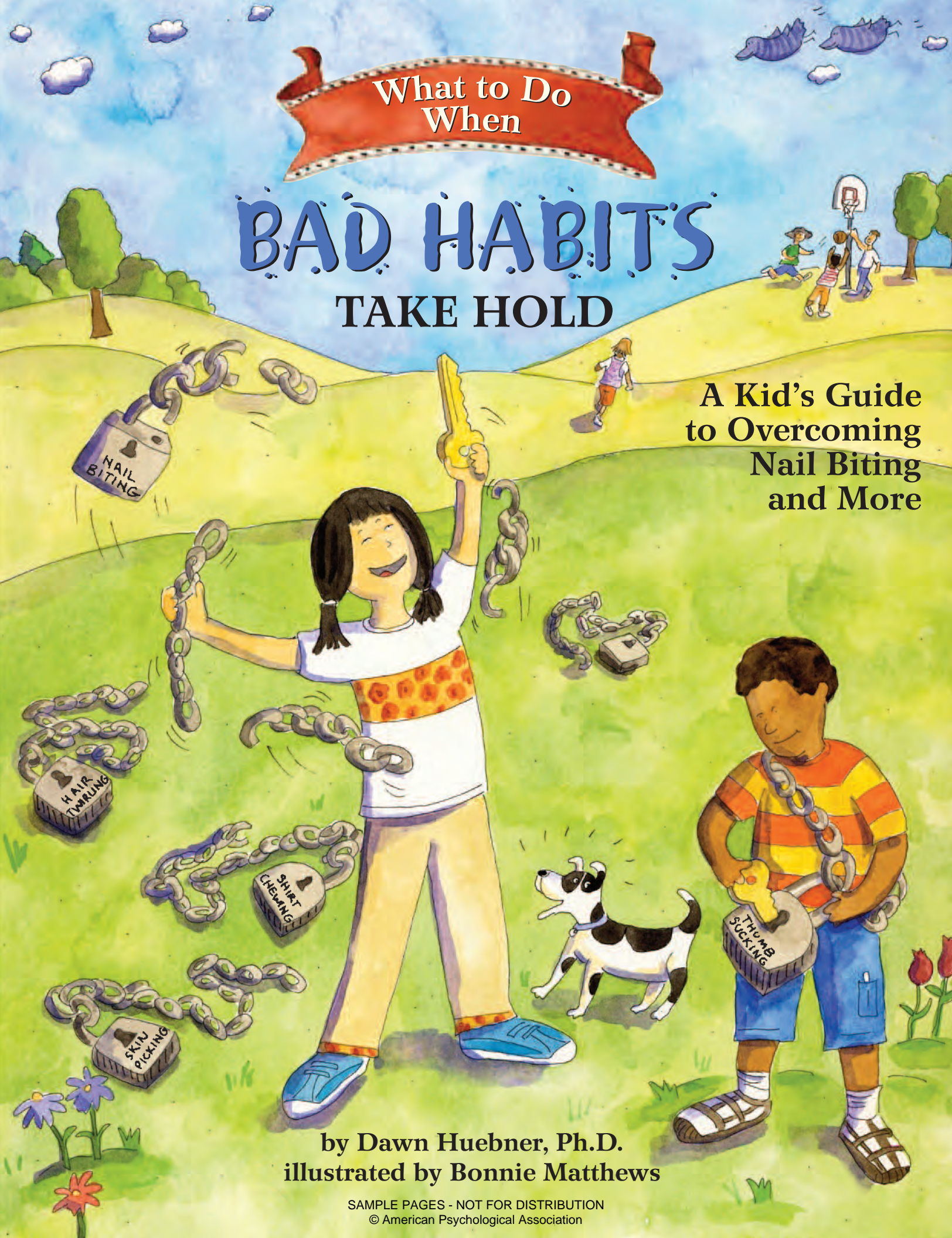


What to Do
When

BAD HABITS TAKE HOLD

A Kid's Guide
to Overcoming
Nail Biting
and More



by Dawn Huebner, Ph.D.
illustrated by Bonnie Matthews

CHAPTER ONE

Getting Started

Remember way back, when you were a little baby? When you were just learning to walk? Just learning to talk? The world looked **HUGE** and sometimes scary. There were all sorts of things you couldn't possibly do, even if you really wanted to try.

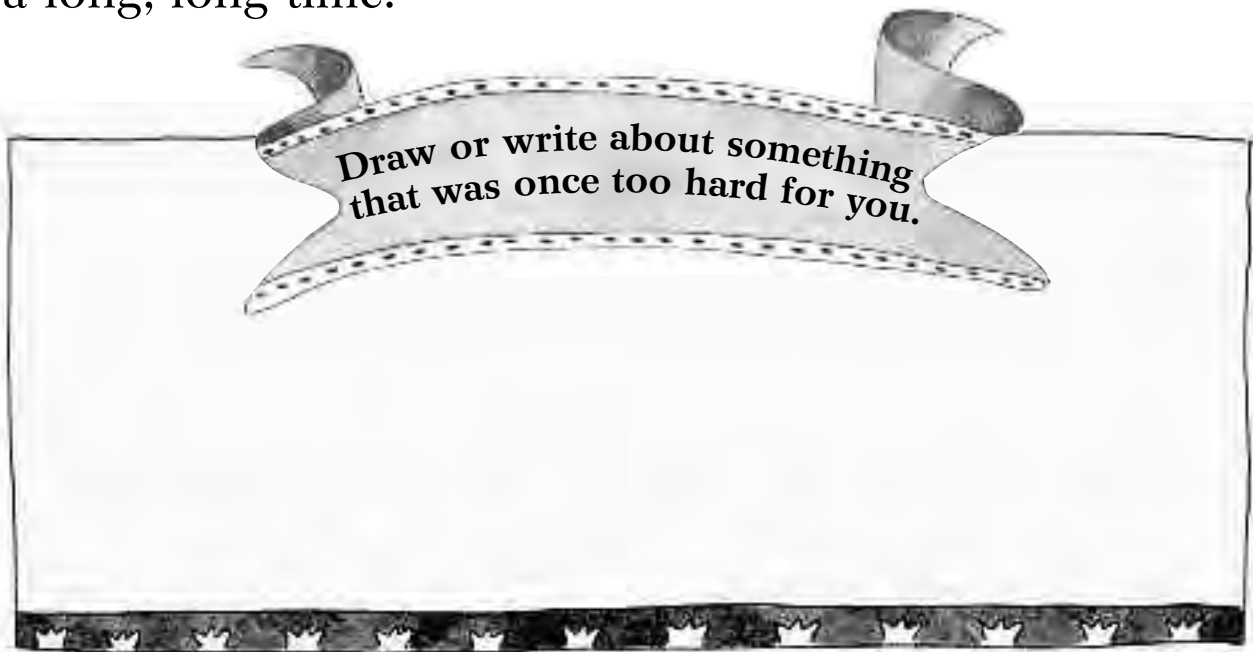
You couldn't tie your own shoes.

You couldn't write your own name.

You couldn't even get a spoon to land in your mouth.



Those things were just too hard. It stayed that way for a long, long time.



But then you started to learn.
You learned to tie your shoes
and write your name.
You learned to eat correctly.
You learned to walk and
talk and add numbers
together. You learned to
snap your fingers and
brush your teeth.

And everything you
learned, even the things you
can't really remember
learning, you learned one
step at a time.





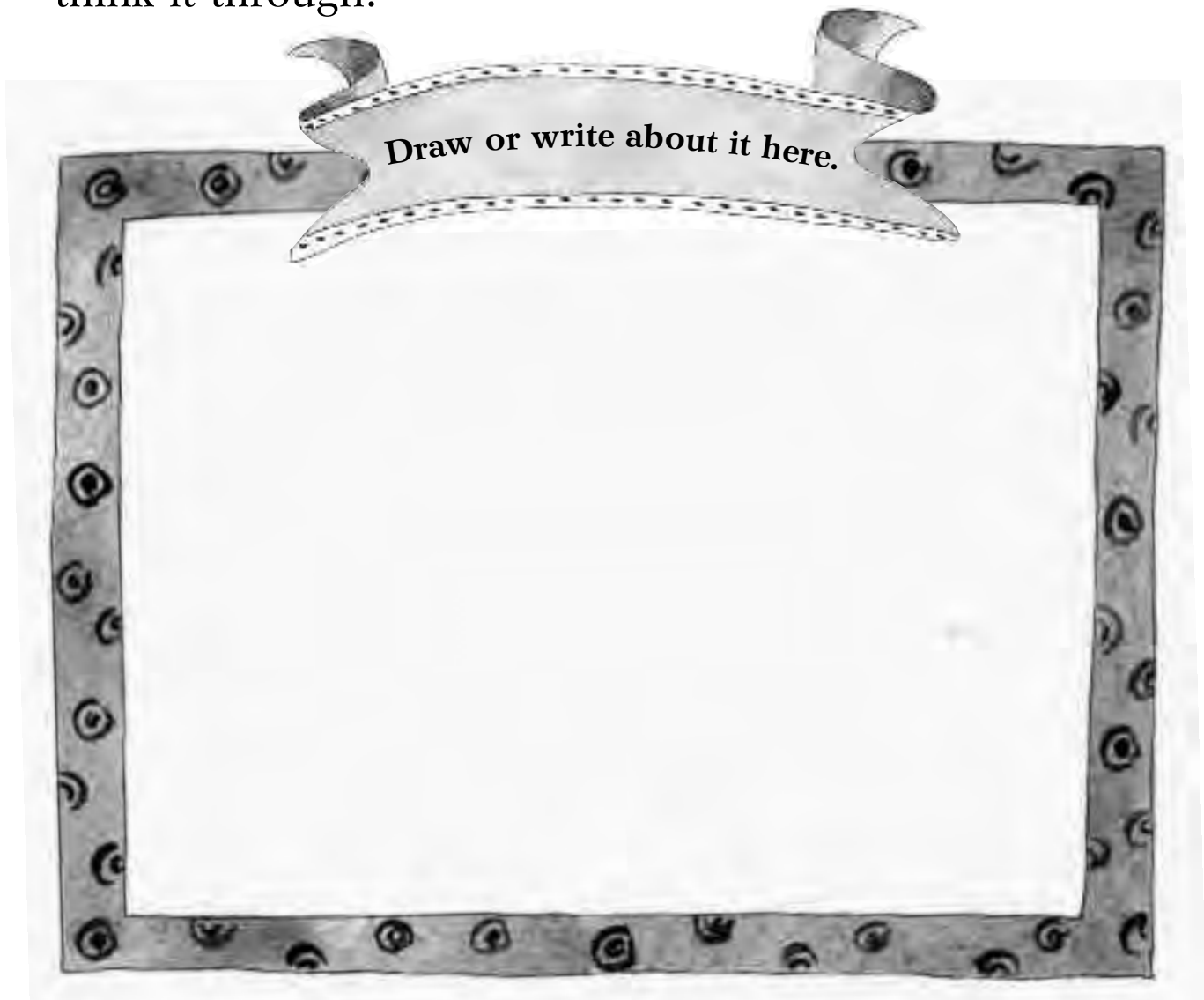
Take washing your hands. Yup, even that was once tricky for you. There are lots of steps. You turn on the water. You squirt some soap, rub your hands together, and rinse them clean. It's easy now, and you go through all the steps without even thinking about them. But if you stand in a public bathroom, you'll hear parents holding their little kids up to the sink and telling them, "Rub your hands together." That's because little kids don't know they're supposed to do that.

But you know. You know because someone once taught you, and then you practiced over and over again. You practiced washing your hands so much that it became a habit.

A habit is something you do again and again, without really thinking about it.

Grabbing your backpack before you head out to school is a habit. So is reaching for your fork when you sit down to eat, or writing your name at the top of your paper. And even snuggling down in your favorite snuggle position before you fall asleep, that's a habit, too. You probably have a ton of habits. Everyone does.

Think of something you do in a certain way. Something you do again and again, without needing to think it through.



People work at learning good habits. Your parents probably have some habits they want you to learn, things they remind you about now but want you to do on your own someday.



Put a check mark next to the helpful habits you already have and the ones you're working on learning.

Helpful Habits

- ☐ Saying “excuse me” after burping
- ☐ Using a napkin at the table
- ☐ Coughing into your arm
- ☐ Holding the door when someone is behind you
- ☐ Chewing with your mouth closed
- ☐ Saying “hello” to people you meet
- ☐ Brushing your teeth every day
- ☐ Waiting in line without pushing
- ☐ Making your bed in the morning
- ☐ Waiting your turn to speak

These are all helpful habits. Helpful habits are polite. Or they keep you healthy, or make your day run more smoothly. Helpful habits are habits to hold on to.

But there are other kinds of habits, too. Habits that aren't healthy. Habits that end up causing **PROBLEMS** for people. Most of us have a few of these not-so-helpful habits.

Think about all the people you know: grown-ups, kids, even yourself. Put a check mark next to each not-so-helpful habit if you know at least one person who does it.

Not-So-Helpful Habits

- ☐ Leaving lights on when no one is in the room
- ☐ Biting or picking at fingernails
- ☐ Talking with mouth full
- ☐ Sucking thumb
- ☐ Leaving dirty laundry on the floor
- ☐ Twirling hair until it snarls
- ☐ Chewing on clothing
- ☐ Picking cuts or mosquito bites or scabs until they bleed
- ☐ Forgetting to flush the toilet

If you're reading this book, chances are good that you have a not-so-helpful habit.

Congratulations! Not because you have bad habits, but because you're admitting to them. Some people try to pretend that their bad habit isn't a bad habit at all, which is pretty ridiculous when you think about it.

And some people feel ashamed about their bad habits, maybe because those habits have been the focus of so much negative attention.





You have probably tried to stop your bad habit. Maybe lots of times. Well, guess what? You don't have to do that anymore.

That's right. From now on, you don't have to try to *not* suck your thumb or *not* bite your nails. You don't have to work on stopping whatever it is you're doing. That's because it's nearly impossible to simply **STOP** a bad habit.

But it is possible, very, very possible, to develop a new habit, and to make the new habit take the place of the old habit, so that the old habit doesn't bother you anymore.

Lots of kids have learned to do it. And you can, too. Keep reading and you will learn how.



What to Do When **BAD HABITS** TAKE HOLD

A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Nail Biting and More

Nail biting. Thumb sucking. Hair twirling. Scab picking. Shirt chewing. Do you have a habit that's hard to stop? A habit that embarrasses you or gets you in trouble? If so, you're not alone. Lots of kids have habits they wish they could lose. But habits are stronger than wishes. They lock on, holding you tight. Even if you want to break free, you can't. Unless you have the keys.

What to Do When Bad Habits Take Hold provides the keys to escape from a variety of pesky habits. Engaging examples, lively illustrations, and step-by-step instructions teach essential habit-busting strategies, targeting everything from nail biting and thumb sucking to shirt chewing, hair twirling, and more. This interactive self-help book is the complete resource for educating, motivating, and empowering children to set themselves free.



What-to-Do Guides for Kids Helping Kids Live Happier Lives

What to Do When You Worry Too Much

A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety

What to Do When You Grumble Too Much

A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Negativity

What to Do When Your Brain Gets Stuck

A Kid's Guide to Overcoming OCD

What to Do When Your Temper Flares

A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Problems with Anger

What to Do When You Dread Your Bed

A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Problems with Sleep

What to Do When Bad Habits Take Hold

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