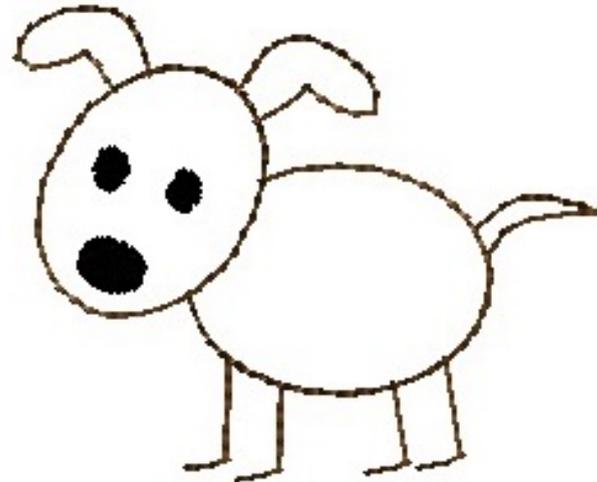


Mila Goes to Pet School

A Children's Story Written about Learning in Psychology

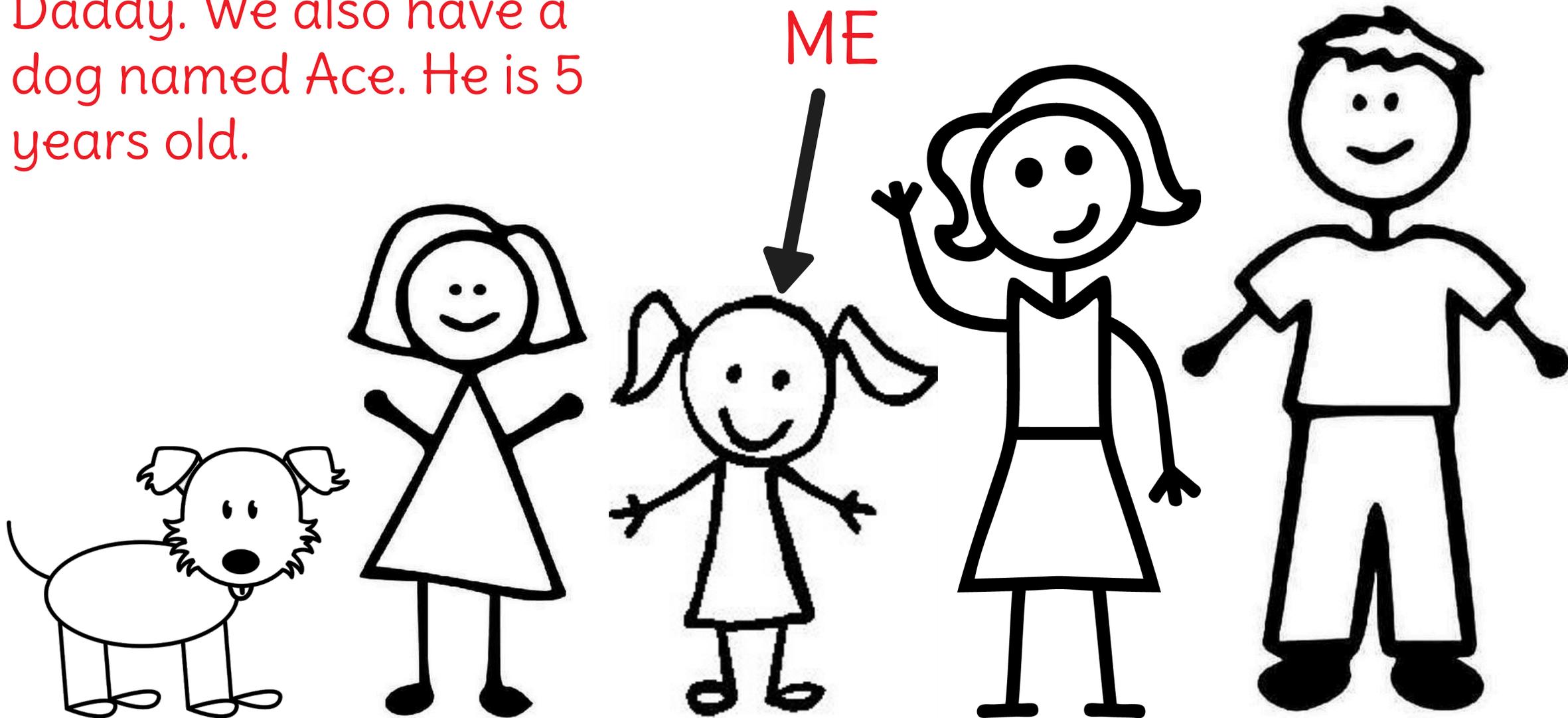
Written By:
Shelby
Cundiff
and Aidan
Bohnsack



We would like to dedicate this short story to Dr. Katie Ann Skogsberg for teaching Aidan and I everything we know about learning within the field of psychology.

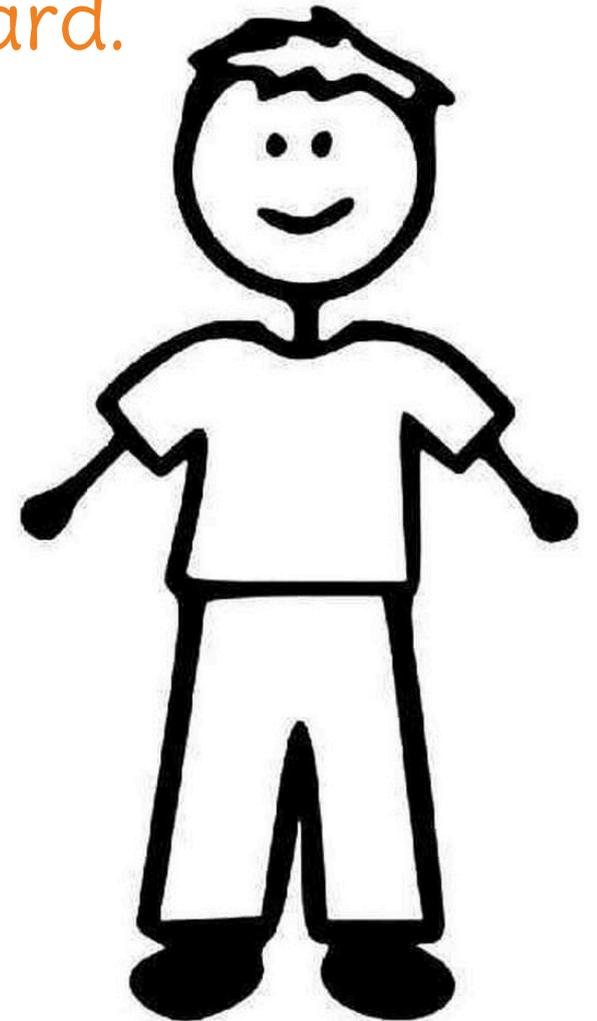
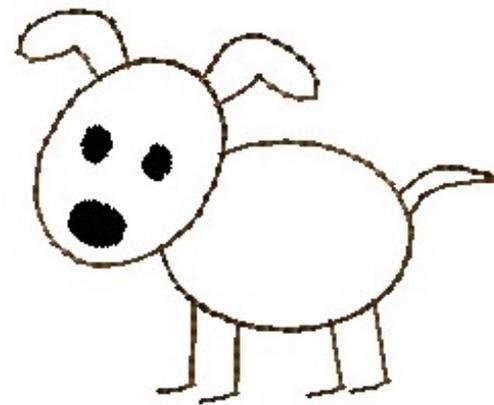
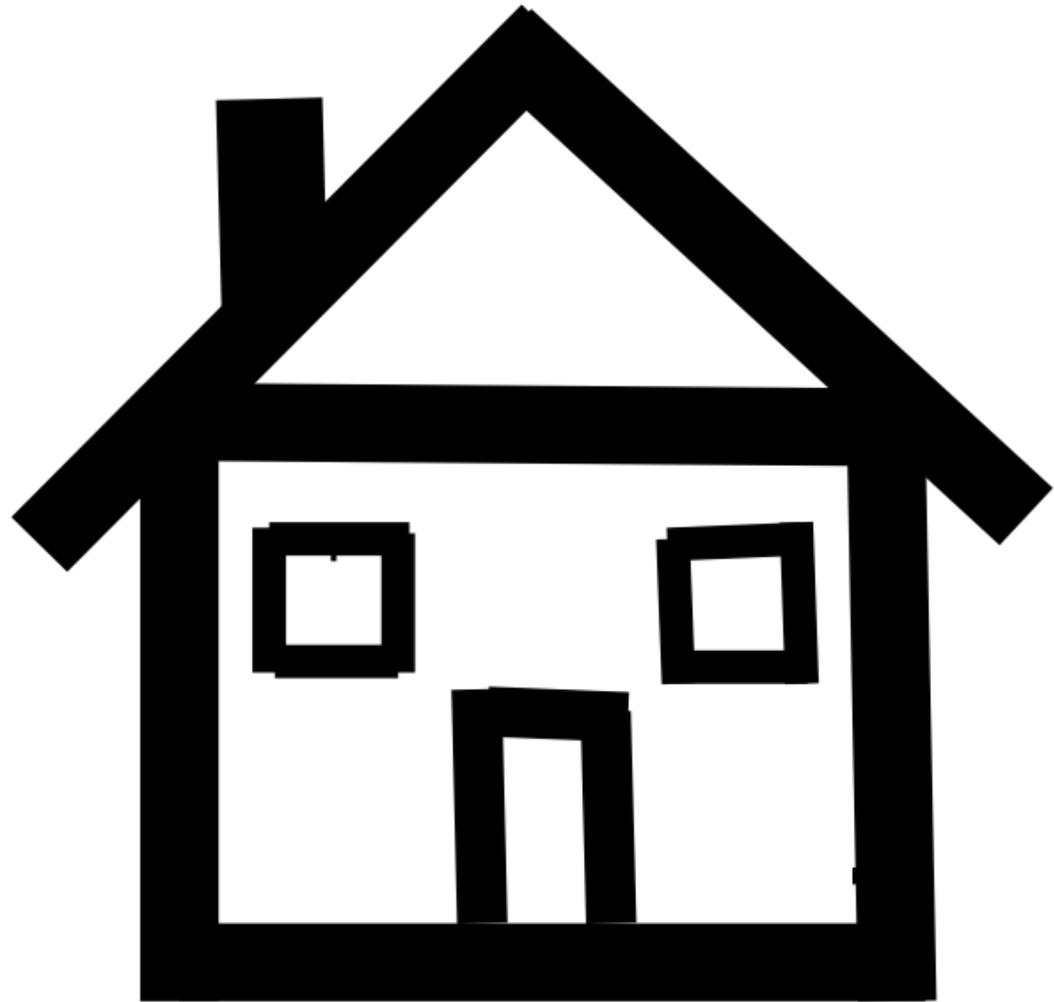
My name is Ava. I am 10 years old and I live in Louisville, Kentucky. I have a sister named Carly who is 12 and we live with our Mommy and Daddy. We also have a dog named Ace. He is 5 years old.

Daddy is a high school psychology teacher, and Mommy trains dogs! They always tell us that their jobs go together, but Sissy and I aren't sure how.



Daddy came home today with a NEW puppy! Her name is Mila, and she is a black lab. Mommy says those are the best dogs.

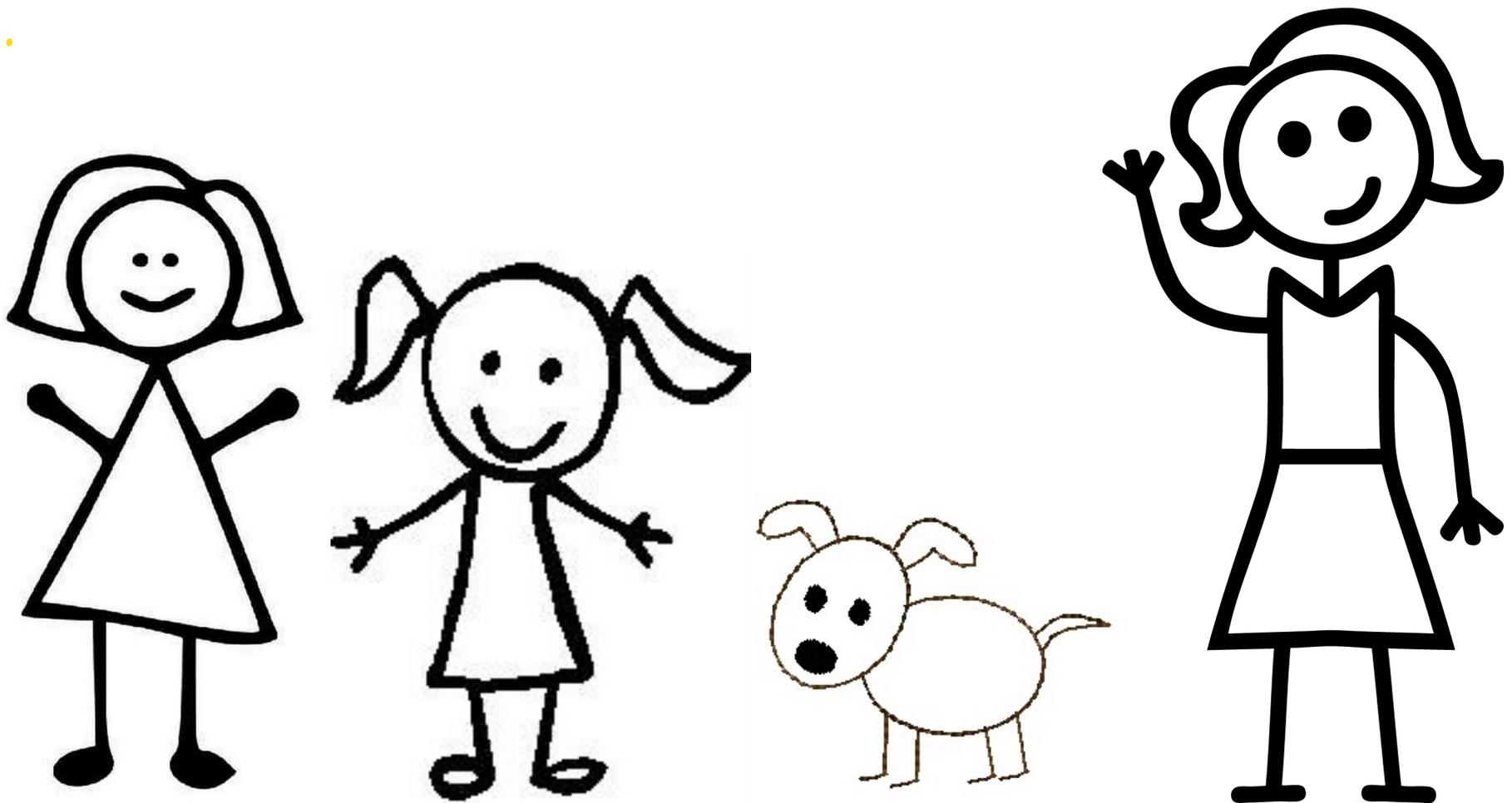
Mommy and Daddy said that we have to help train Mila. We are going to teach her to “sit” “paw” and “stay”. I have never trained a dog before, and I am very nervous. Carly said that she thinks it will be easy, but I think it will be hard.



WEEK ONE

At night time, Ace sleeps with Carly. But, Daddy said that if I do a good job at helping train Mila, she can sleep in MY bed!

We started training Mila outside today and Mommy explained to us that learning is seen as a change of behavior that results from experiences. Experiences are events that happen to us in our lives.



WEEK ONE

Did you guys know that there are different types of learning? Mommy and Daddy told us that today. There is non-associative learning and associative learning. When training Mila, our parents told us that we are going to use associative learning.

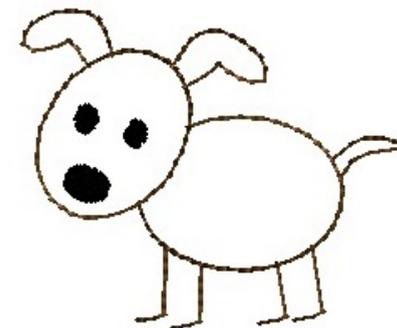
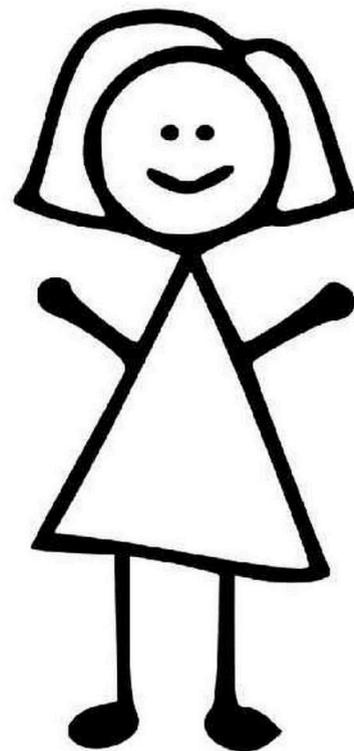
Associative learning is when two events are linked together. These events normally take place one right after the other.



WEEK ONE

After we learned about the types of learning, Carly and I learned about the different types of conditioning. When it comes to learning, the two types of conditioning are classical conditioning and operant conditioning. When training our puppy, we are going to use operant conditioning.

Operant conditioning is the learning process where the consequences of an action are more likely to happen again in the future.

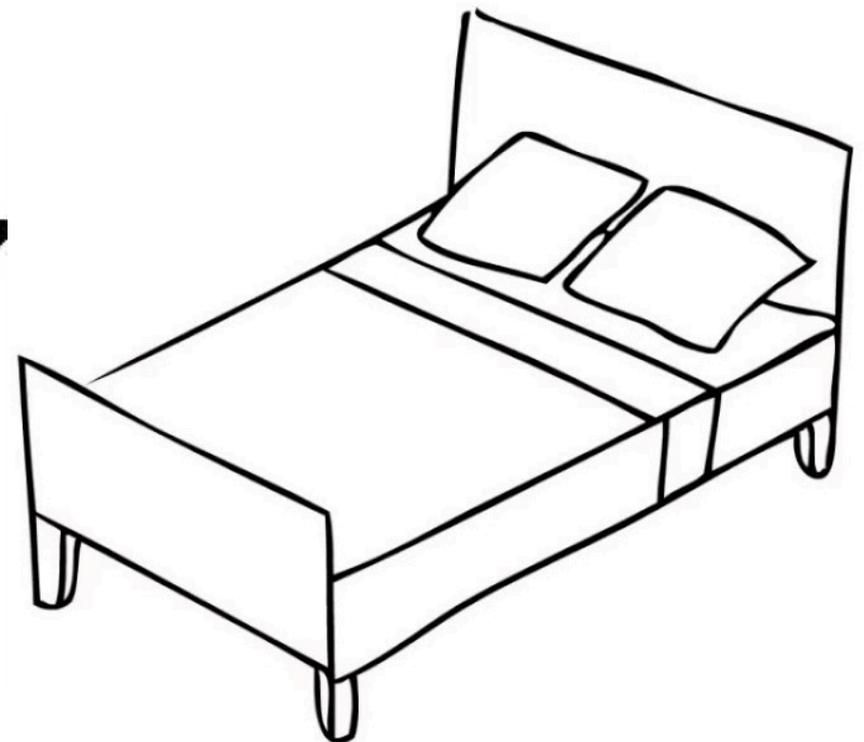


Mommy and Daddy said we are using operant conditioning today!

WEEK TWO

Daddy told us today about something called the law of effect, which means that any behavior that leads to something good is more likely to occur again. Daddy told me that this would be like me cleaning up my room and then getting a piece of candy!

The candy would be called a reinforcer. A reinforcer is something that will occur after the desired behavior, and helps for the behavior to be repeated!



WEEK TWO

While the candy is a reinforcer for me cleaning my room, the treat that Mila gets after she “sits” or gives her paw is her reinforcer!

Here I am giving Mila a treat after she sits!



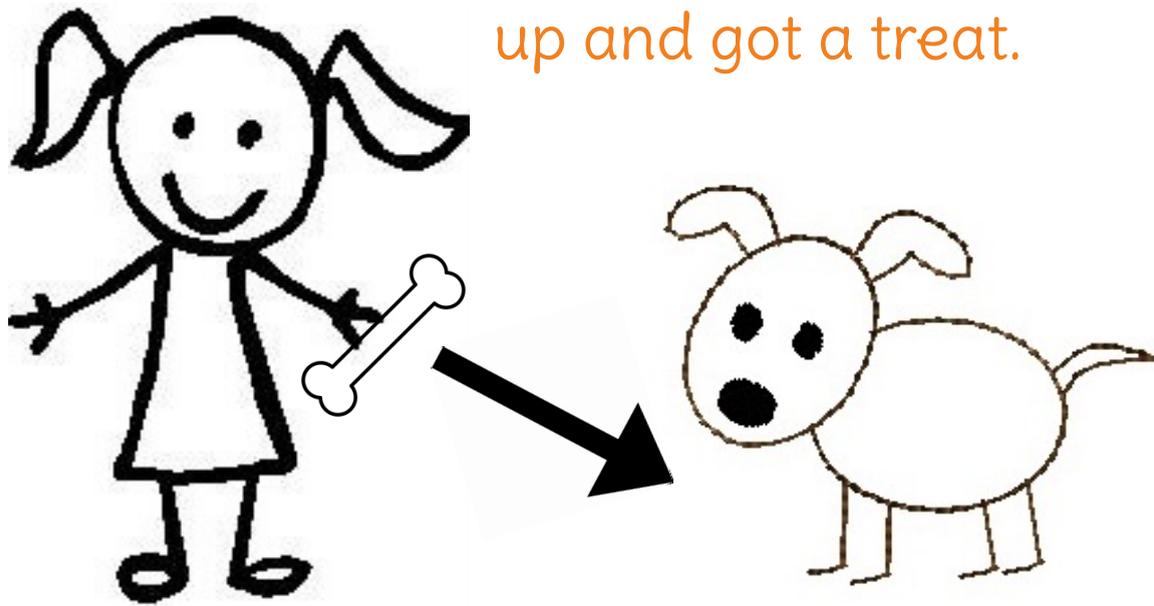
WEEK TWO

Carly and I learned about shaping today. Shaping is a large part of operant conditioning, and it means that we have to give Mila a treat every time she does something CLOSE to what we want her to do.

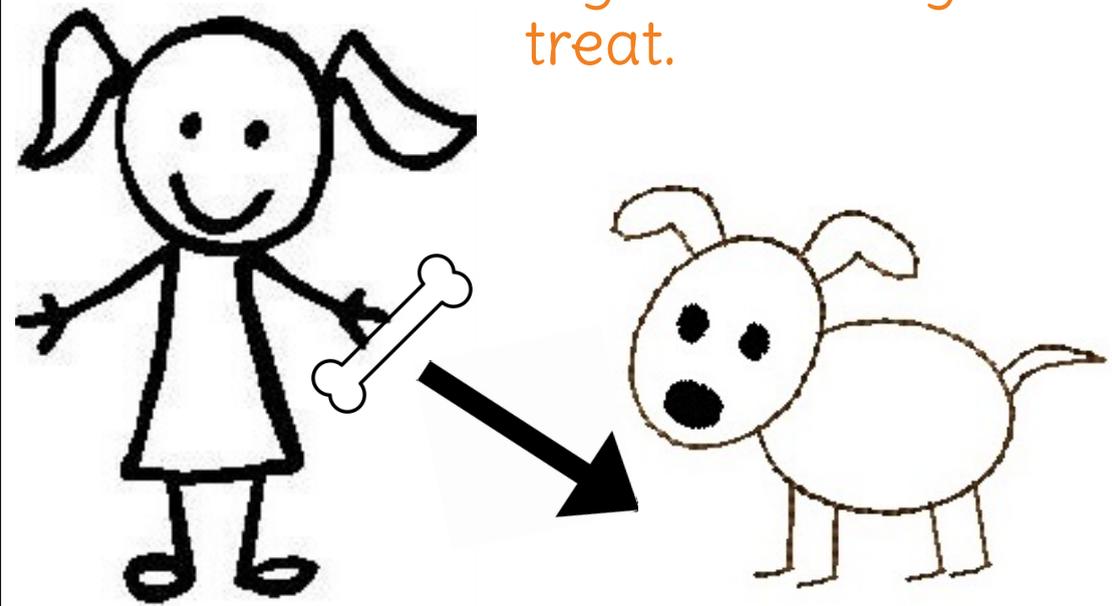
So, today, I told Mila “paw” and she lifted her paw in the air but did not give it to me directly. Either way, she still got a treat! I have to make sure I put her paw in my hand before I give her the treat.

But, once it has been a couple of times, I only give Mila a treat when she hands me her paw.

Mila put her paw up and got a treat.



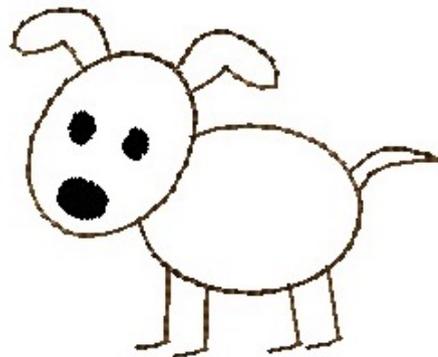
Mila put her paw in my hand and got a treat.



WEEK TWO

Carly and I learned something else new today! Remember how we talked about reinforcers? Today we learned that there are different types of reinforcement. Mom and Dad said that we are using positive reinforcement while we train Mila.

Positive reinforcement means that we want the behavior to be repeated, so we add in a reward to help increase the chance after the behavior occurs. Mila got a treat after she gave me her paw, so she gave me her paw again to get another treat!



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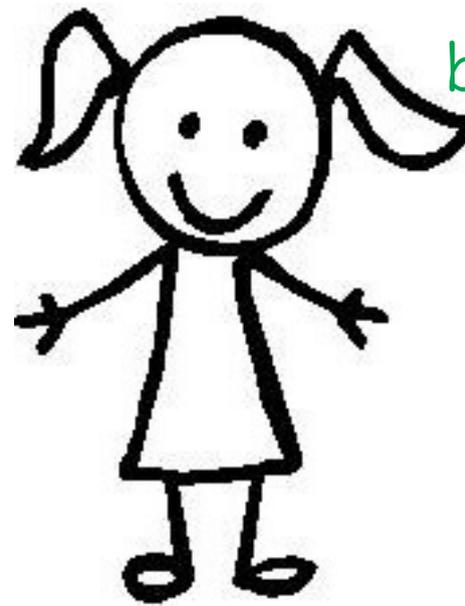
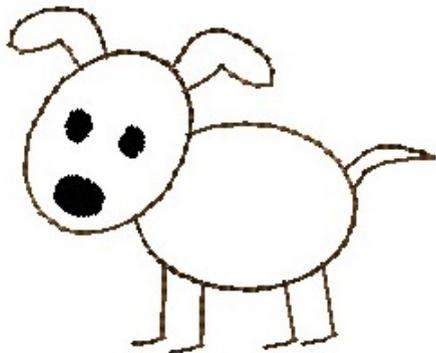
WEEK THREE

Today, Mommy and Daddy told me that I have to stop giving Mila a treat after every time she gives me her paw. This is the idea of partial reinforcement, which means we will only give her a treat sometimes instead of every time.

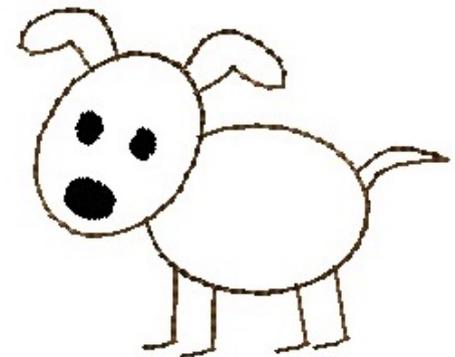
Daddy also told me about an idea called the partial-reinforcement extinction effect, which means that Mila will probably repeat her behavior more times to figure out when she will get a treat, or when she won't get her treat.



Mila gave me her paw and got a treat!



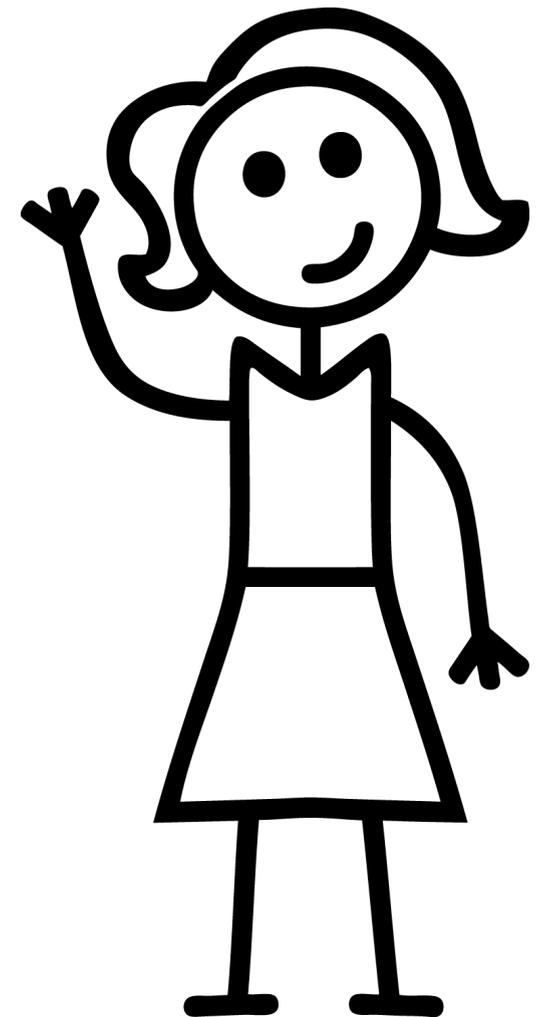
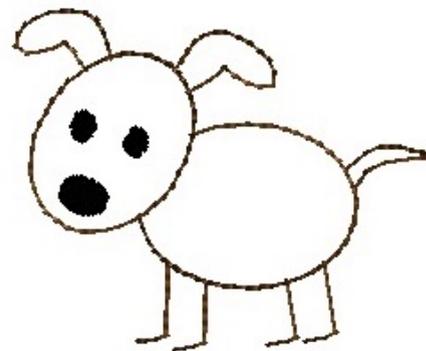
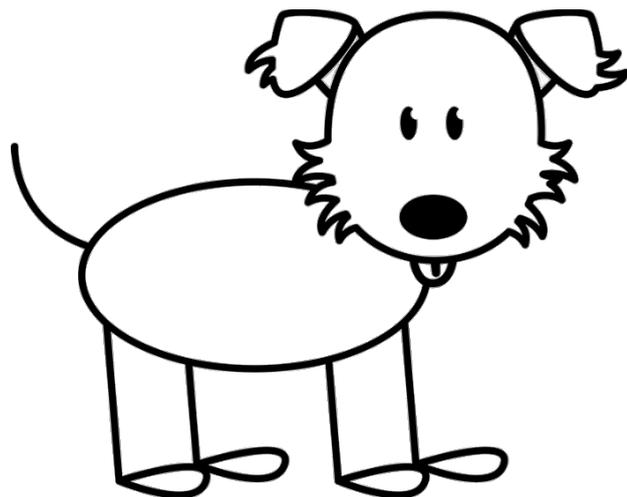
Mila gave me her paw, but did not get a treat.



WEEK THREE

Something really cool happened today! We have taught Mila to sit and to give her paw, but we are having trouble getting Mila to stay.

Mommy told Carly and I that when she has trouble teaching one dog a trick, she will use another dog as an example! This is called modeling, which means that there is an imitation of an observed behavior.



WEEK THREE

After Mommy told us about the idea of modeling, we decided to let Ace help us train Mila. We took them both outside, and we showed Ace his treat and told him to “stay”. He did, and once we said “come” he ran over to us!

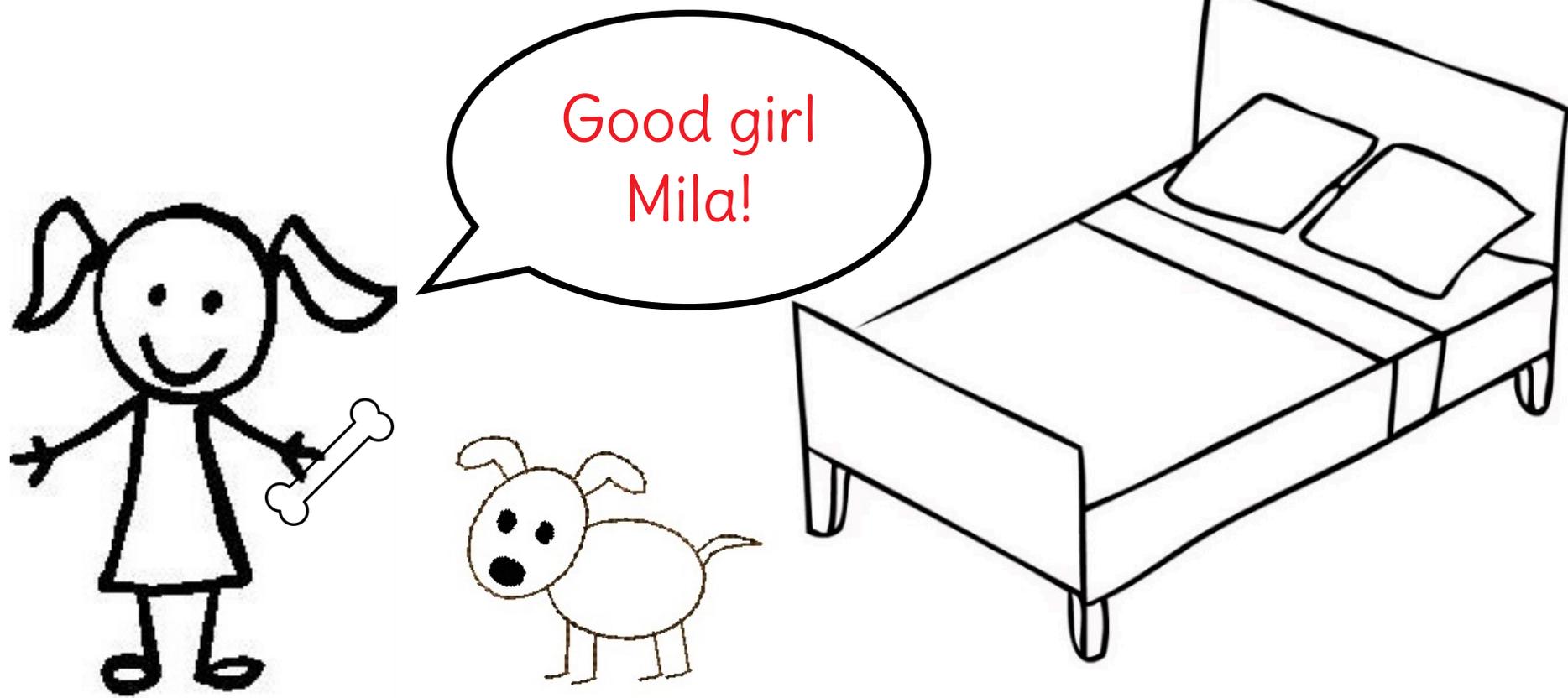
After a couple of times, Mila started to do this too. I thought about how I have used modeling in my life. Sometimes Carly tells me I don’t have the best table manners. But, I watch her and learn from her to chew with my mouth closed and keep my napkin in my lap.



WEEK FOUR

Mila is almost fully trained! She has learned to sit, give her paw, and to stay. We are now teaching her to “speak”, with the help of partial reinforcement, modeling, and positive reinforcement, of course.

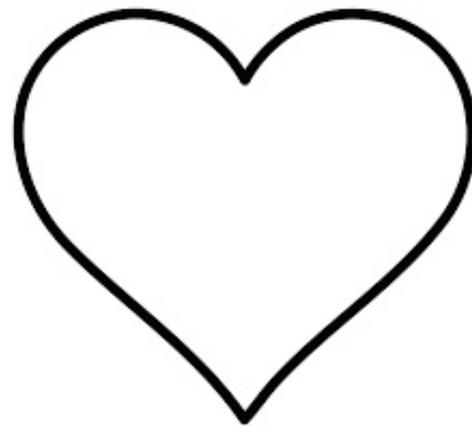
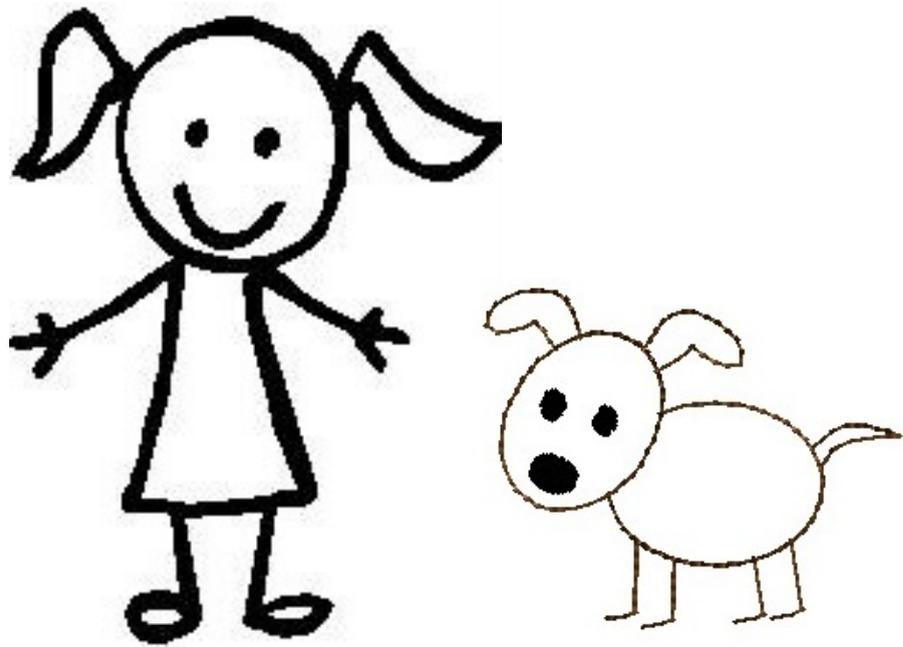
Mila also gets to sleep with me, which makes me so happy! She is my best friend.



Some people think that learning all the time is boring. But, I think that learning while having fun is the best.

I had so much fun with my family learning about Daddy's job as a psychology teacher and Mommy's job as a dog trainer. Learning about how their jobs work together is so fun, and it was also fun to train Mila.

I can't wait to see how big Mila grows, and learn more about psychology in the future. I think maybe one day I'll be a psychology teacher, too.



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