Punctuation marks with independent clauses

Independent clauses can be separated (or connected) in a variety of ways.

**Full stop**

When both clauses are of equal importance and can stand on their own, we usually use a full stop to separate them.

> My toddler refuses to take a nap in the afternoon. He thinks he will miss out on some of the action.

Here the two clauses are separated with a full stop because they express complete thoughts and can stand on their own.

**Comma + coordinating conjunction**

Sometimes we use a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

> My toddler refuses to take a nap in the afternoon, and I’m afraid that he will soon drive me crazy.

Here the two independent clauses are connected with a conjunction and separated with a comma.

**By using a semicolon**

In situations where you use a semicolon, you can use a full stop as well. The semicolon is preferred when the independent clauses are too closely related.

> In spite of staying up all day, my toddler refuses to go to bed early; he thinks he will miss something.

We can also use a transitional adverb to establish the connection between two independent clauses. Note that a transitional adverb (e.g. therefore, in addition, moreover, as a result etc.)
Punctuation marks with independent clauses

does not connect the two clauses. It merely shows the flow of ideas.

   My toddler kept me awake all night; as a result, I don’t feel very well.

Instead of the semicolon, we can use a full stop here.

   My toddler kept me up all night. As a result, I don’t feel very well.

Don’t forget to put a comma after the transitional verb. Also note that a transitional adverb that follows a semicolon begins with a small letter.