MY GOODBYE BOOKLET

A Booklet About Military Separation for Young Children from Three through Five

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A Booklet about Military Separations for Three through Five Year Olds.

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MY GOODBYE BOOK is one of a series of four booklets about military separations for children and young people. These booklets were written as part of **Operation R.E.A.D.Y.** under an agreement between the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the United States Army Community and Family Support Center, Department of the Army.

All four booklets were developed with the help of active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve families and Family Support personnel. We sincerely thank all those who helped us produce these publications.

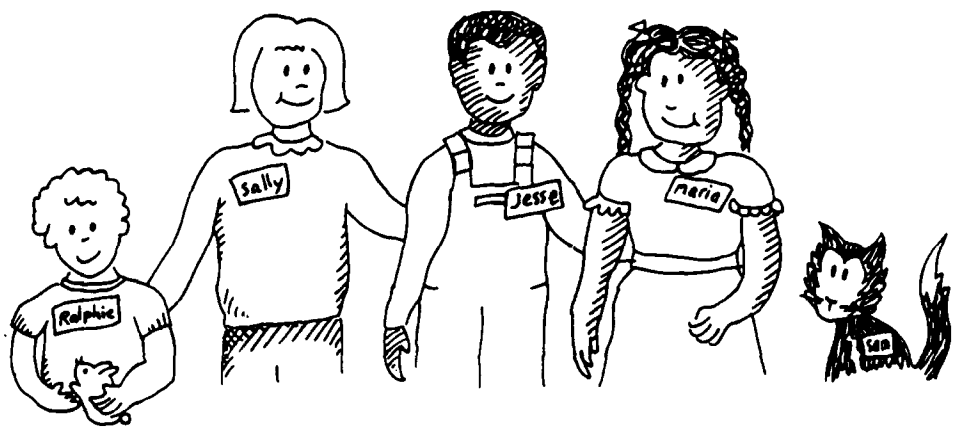
February 1993

A message to parents:

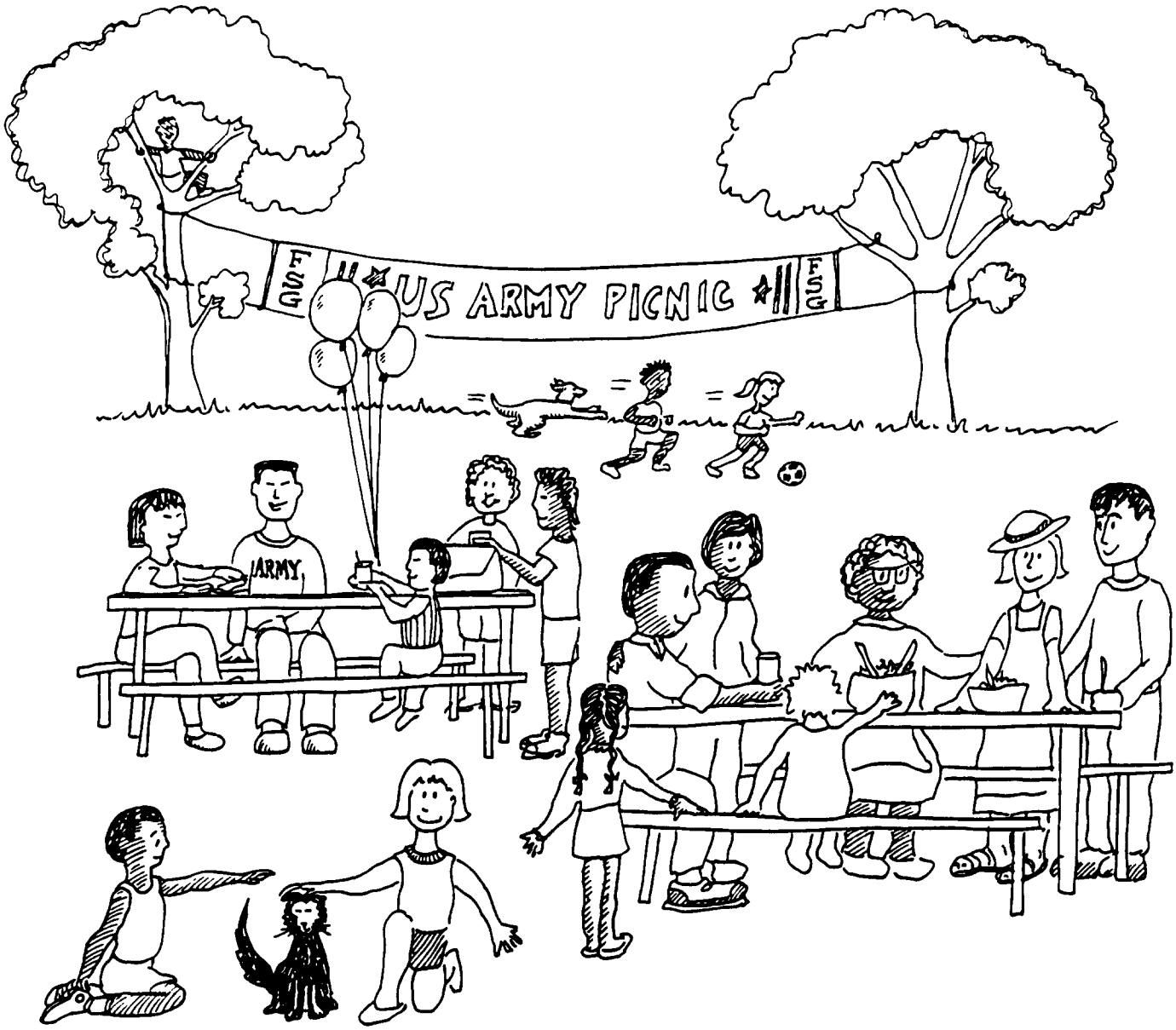
This booklet about military separations is a child's activity book. We hope it will help you to help your children cope with separation. Making plans for a separation from a loved one is hard for everyone. Your children know when a major family event, such as a military separation, is happening, even if they don't have the words to tell you. Children need to be included when you talk about military separations. Explain in simple words why their parent will be leaving. Tell them what will happen during separation. Help them be involved with preparations for homecoming and reunion adjustment. You may be surprised how much your little one can understand.

The story and activities in this booklet were created to help you prepare your children for a military separation. Unfortunately, no one book could fit all families, so we urge you to alter the stories and activities to fit your family needs or situation.

We wish you and your family a smooth separation and happy reunion.

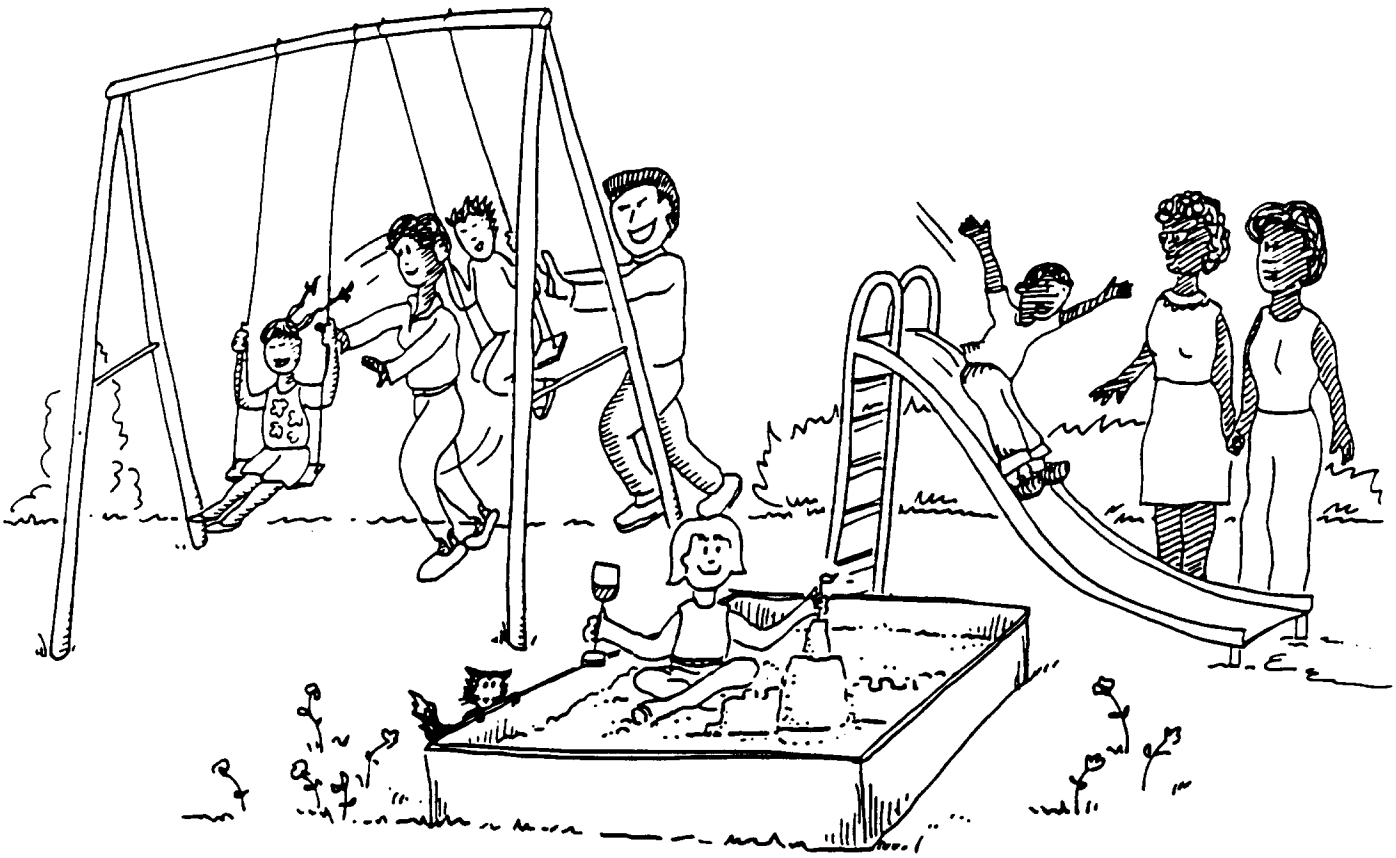


We Are a Military Family



Hi, my name is Sally, I'm almost five. I have a baby brother named Ralphie and a black cat named Sam. My daddy is in the army. That means we are very special. Sometimes my daddy has to go away because he is a soldier. My mommy takes care of us when daddy is away. She has help from our family and friends.

What are these families doing? Where is Sam?

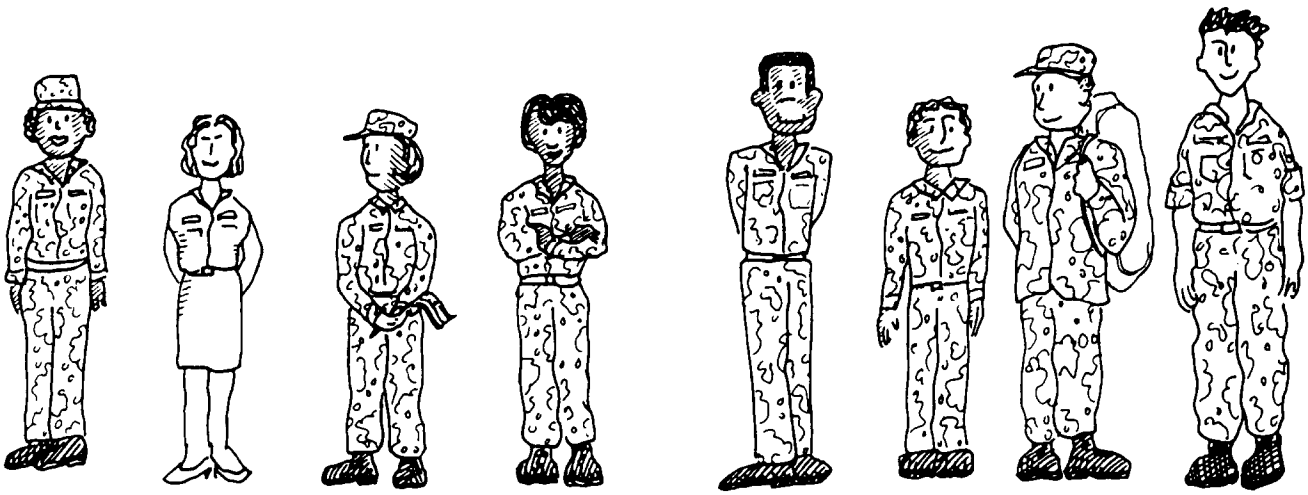


I have two friends, Jesse and Maria. Jesse likes to play on the slide. Jessie's mommy is a soldier. Jesse stays with his grandma when his mommy has to go away. He really likes that. Maria is swinging. Maria's daddy and mommy are both soldiers. Sometimes they both have to go away. Maria likes staying with her aunt when her parents are gone. We love our parents and we miss them a lot when they go away.

Can You Find Jesse and Maria? Can You Find Sam?

Do You See Someone You Know in this Picture?

Is Your Mommy or Daddy in the Military Too?

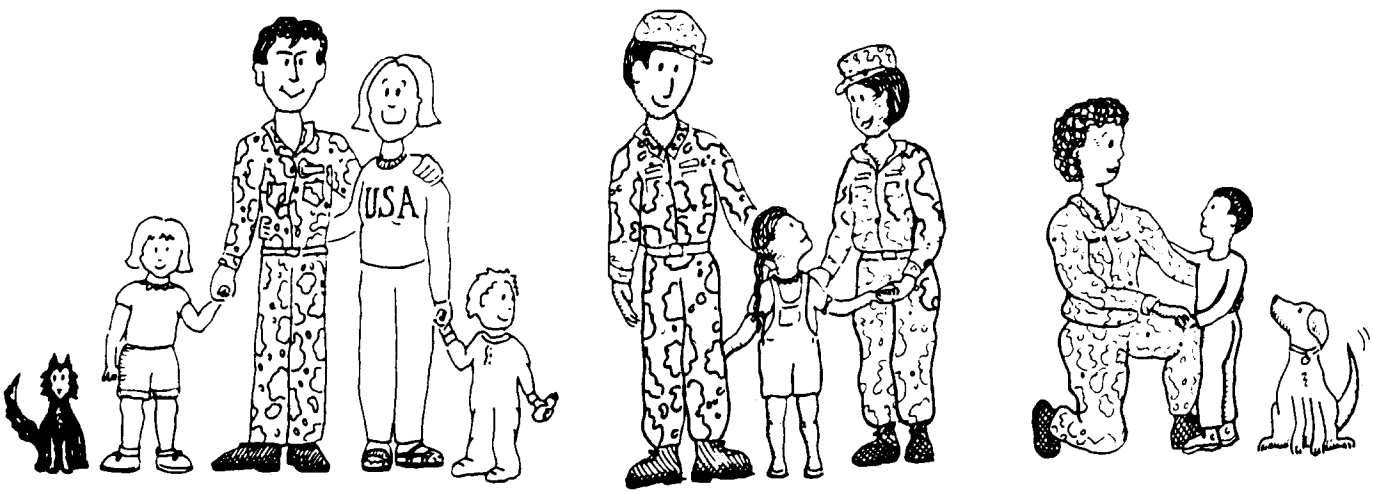


PASTE A PICTURE OF YOUR PARENTS HERE

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PICTURE

When my daddy goes on military trips, I like the special time I have with mommy. Maria says when her daddy and mommy go to special training, she has fun with her aunt. Jesse says he likes to stay with his grandma when his mom goes away. They have fun too.

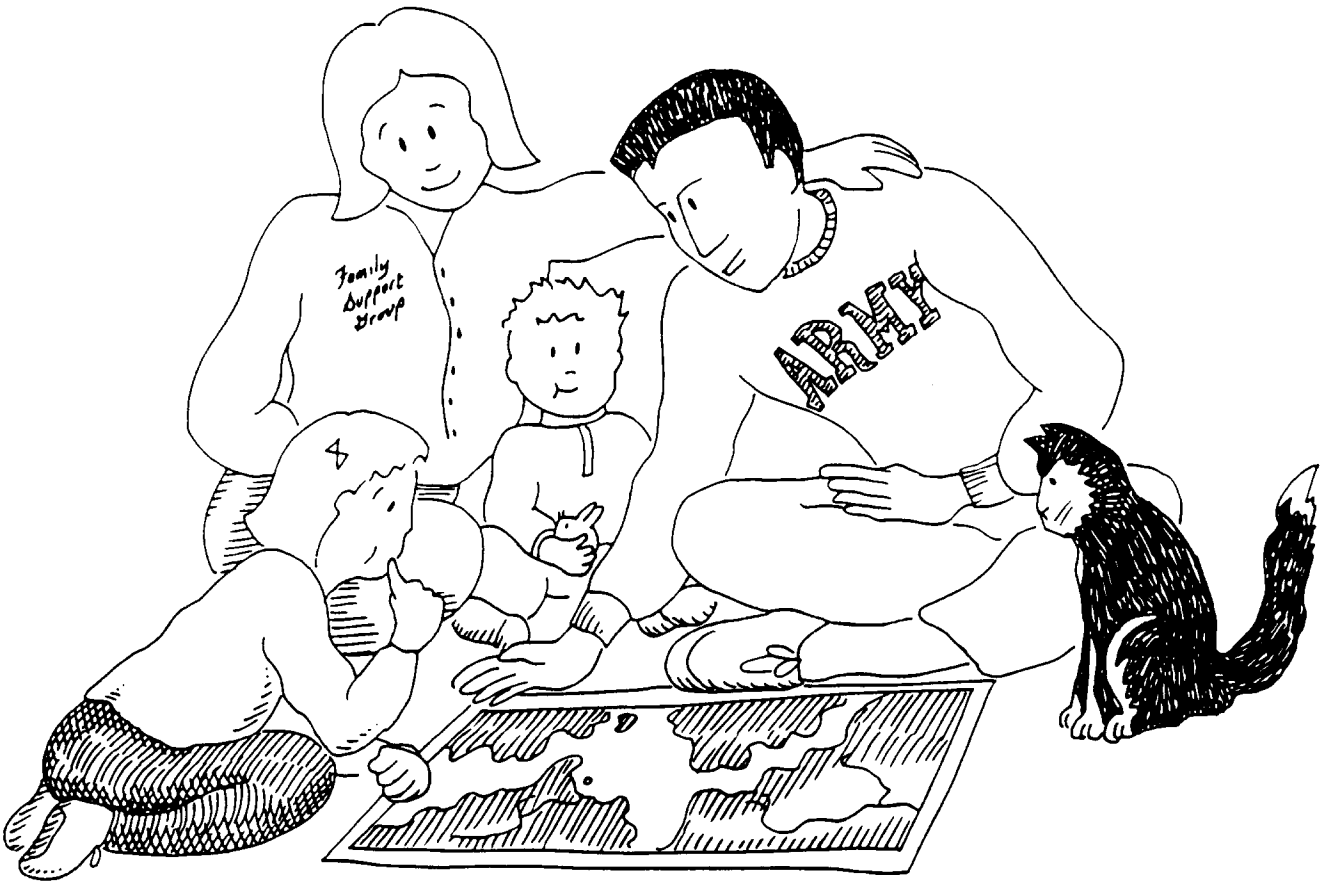
Here is a Picture of Our Families



DRAW OR PASTE A PICTURE OF YOUR FAMILY HERE

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PICTURE

We Talk About Being Apart



What is Sally and Her Family Doing?

In my family we talk about why Daddy has to go away. Sometimes Daddy just has to go away to do his job. Sometimes I get mad at Daddy for leaving. I don't like it when he goes away. Daddy tells me that he thinks about me when he is away from home. I like it when he tells me that. Daddy loves me.

Sometimes I feel scared when my daddy is going away. Once I thought that Daddy left because sometimes I was naughty. But mommy and daddy told me that it was because of Daddy's job that he had to go away. I feel better when my mommy tells me she can take care of me and Ralphie and Sam.

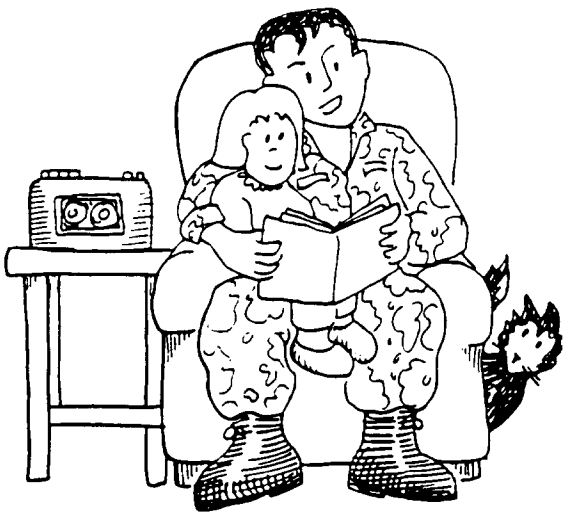
We Plan for Being Apart on Special Days or Holidays

We also talk about what will happen if Daddy is away for a special day like my birthday or Christmas. Daddy was gone on my last birthday. I didn't like that at all. But Jesse and Maria came over, and we took this picture of my birthday party and sent it to Daddy. Daddy had left a birthday present for me when he went away so I knew he cared about my birthday. When Daddy came home he told me that he showed my picture to his friends because he was proud of me.

Who is in this picture? What are they doing?

We Spend Special Times Together

Before Daddy goes away he spends some special time just with me. I like that a lot. He usually makes something special to leave with me while he is away. Sometimes we take family pictures that I can look at when I miss him. Daddy also reads our favorite stories into our tape recorder so I can listen to them when he is gone.



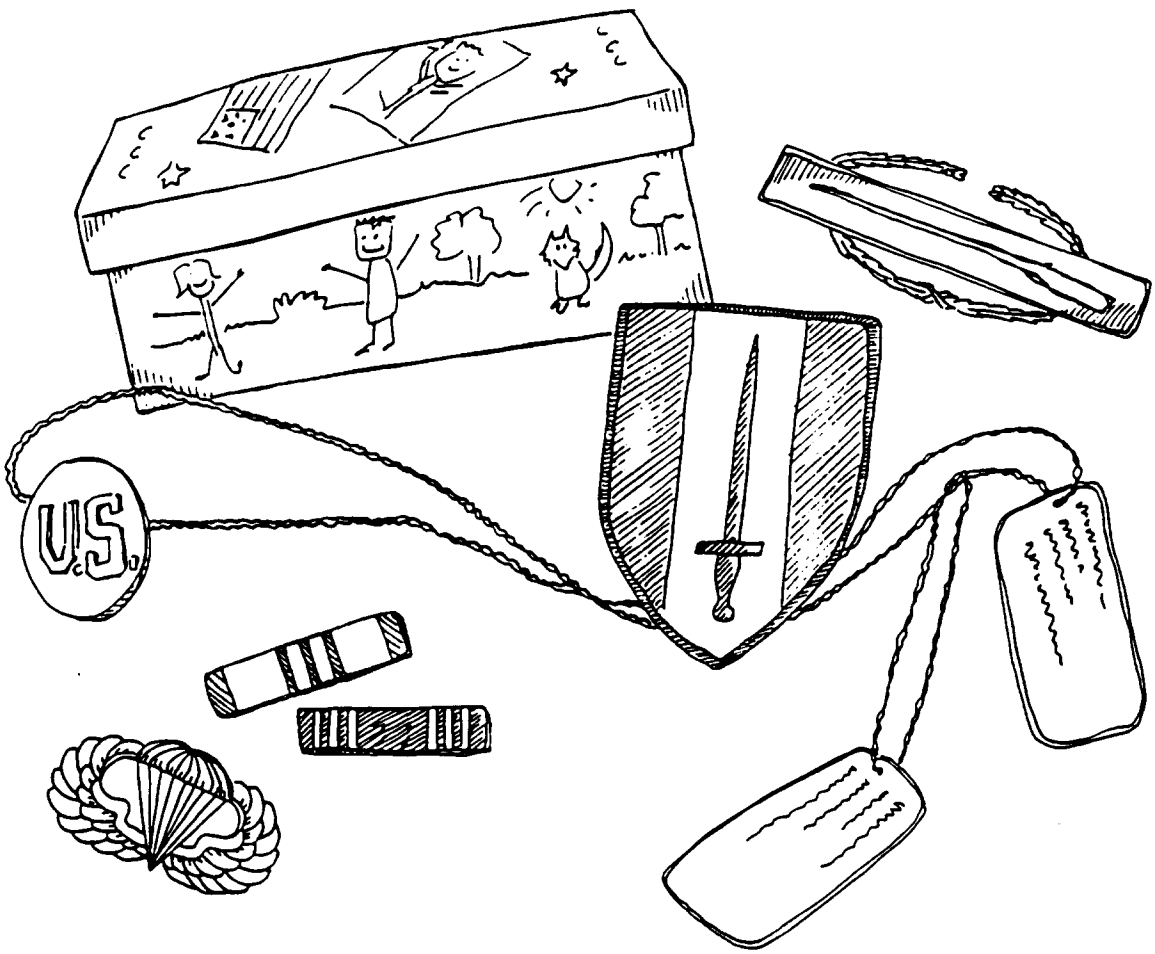
Jesse and his mommy spend special time together too. They made a videotape of a whole day they spent together, and Jessie watches it a lot. He likes looking at the video when his mom is away. Once, Maria and I stayed at his house and watched the video with Jesse and his grandma.

Can You Find Sam?

Making A Treasure Box

Jesse, Maria, and I made special boxes with our parents before they went away. I took my box and covered it with a paper bag. Then I colored it and drew pictures of Daddy on the box. Daddy drew some pictures on it too. Daddy and I put special things in the box, like my favorite picture of him and me, and some patches and ribbons and some medals and his jump wings. Daddy told me some stories about his patches and awards. I like those stories.

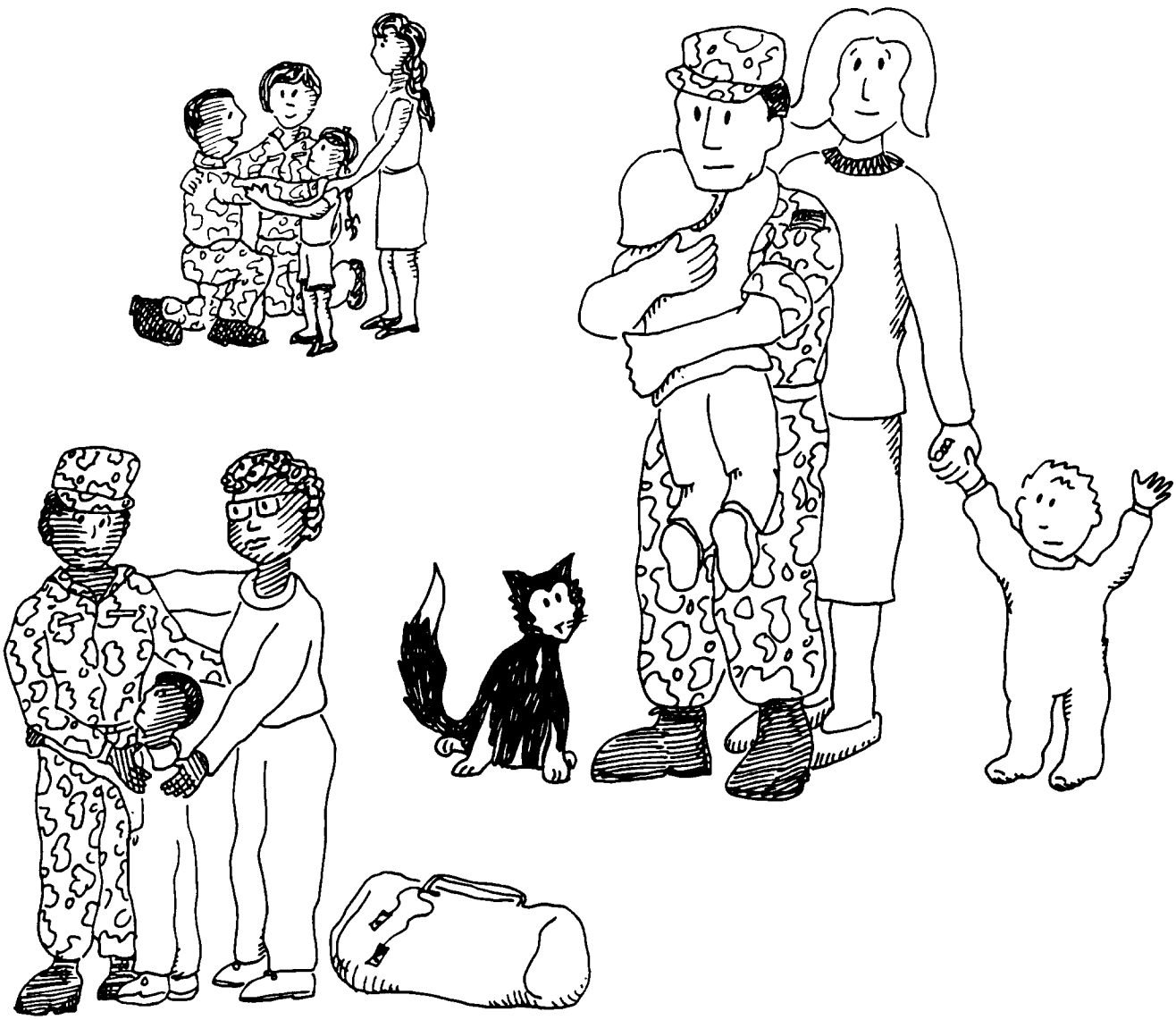
Daddy told me to hold onto my box until he comes home. He said he will try to send me some more things to put in my box. I like to show people the things in my box. Jesse and Maria like their boxes too.



Who Can Help You Make a Treasure Box?

We Say "Goodbye" For Now

When Daddy has to leave, we all say "goodbye" to him. We are sad when he leaves and sometimes we all cry. But I'm happy, too, that I'm grown up enough to get to say goodbye just like my mommy. Ralphie can't say "goodbye", but he waves to Daddy. Sam doesn't do anything, but I think she misses Daddy too. Jesse and Maria say "goodbye for now" to their parents. Other army families say "goodbye" too.

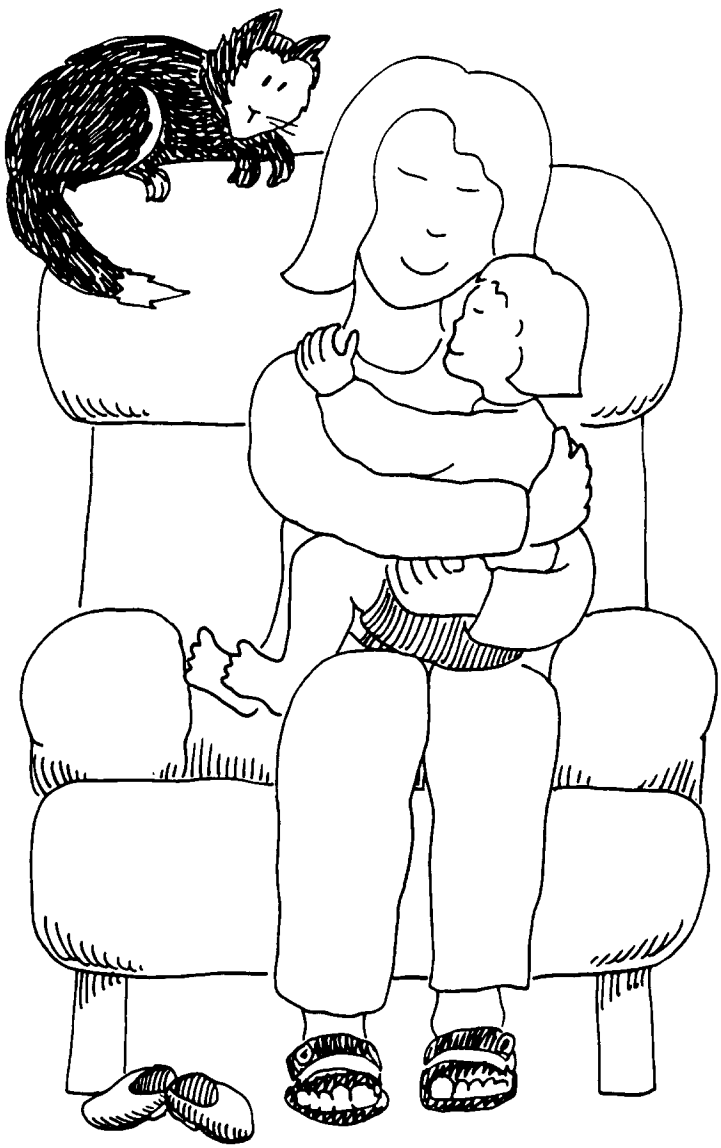


Who is Saying "Goodbye" in these Pictures?

When Our Parents Go Away We Feel Sad

When Daddy is away, I feel sad. Sometimes I cry. So does my baby brother, Ralphie. Sometimes Mommy is sad when Daddy is gone. When Mommy is sad, I feel sad too. We hug each other a lot.

When I am sad, my mommy holds me and talks to me and I feel so much better. When we feel sad it helps us to hug each other.



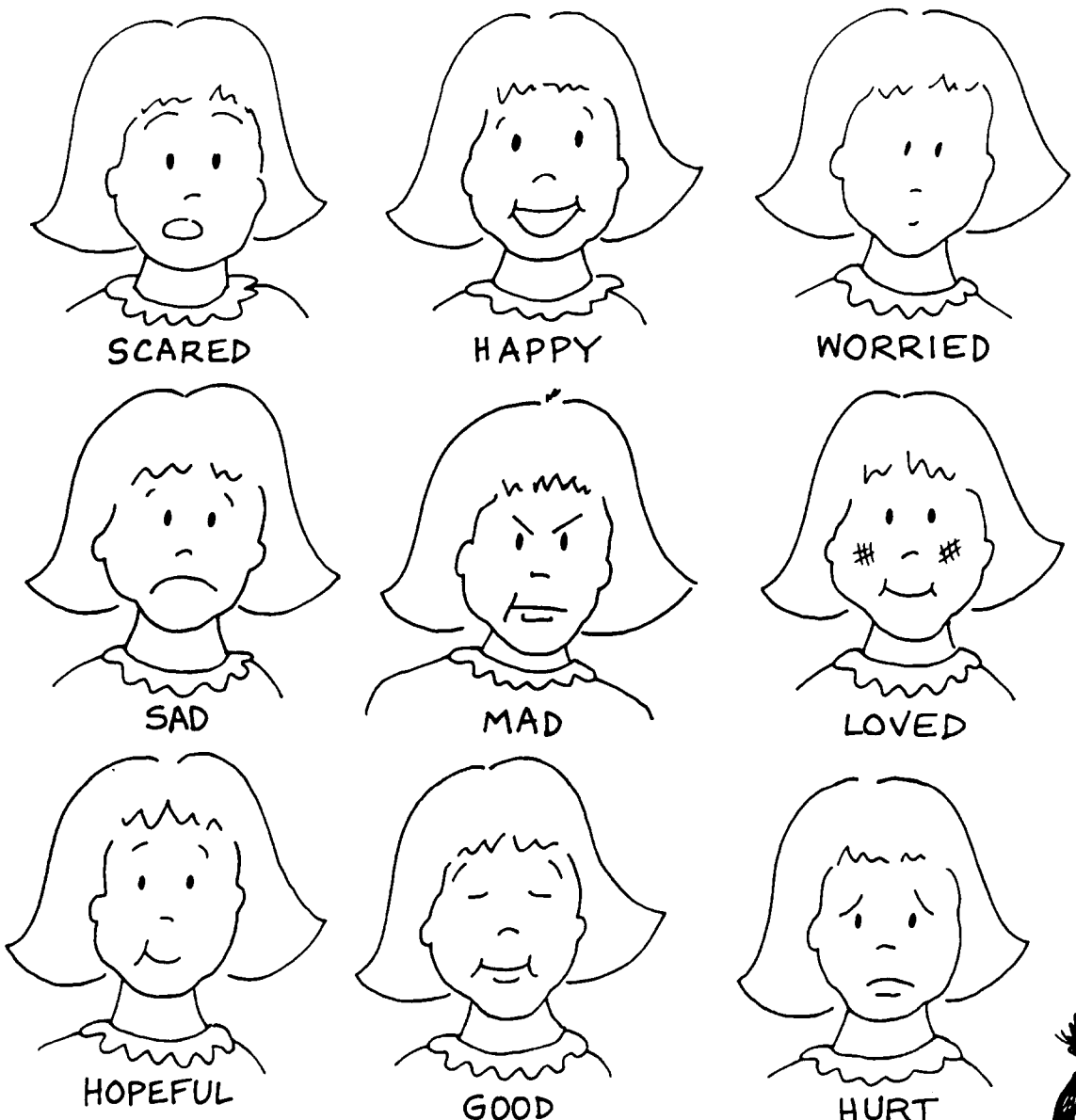
Who is in this picture? What are they doing?

How Do You Feel Today?

When Daddy is away, Mommy and I talk about how we feel. I like it when Mommy tells me how she feels too. Mommy said that we can have all kinds of feelings. Sometimes we have two feelings at one time. We can feel sad and angry and that feels really strange. Mommy helps me understand my feelings.

Here are some of the ways I feel when Daddy is gone. Today I feel sad.

FIND THE SAD PICTURE



Showing How I Feel...

DRAW A PICTURE ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL WHEN YOUR FAMILY IS APART

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PICTURE

We Stay Close When We Are Apart
Pictures For My Wall

When Daddy is gone there are lots of ways we stay close. Mommy and I put up lots of pictures of my daddy. We tape up pictures of Daddy by my bed where I can see them. Sometimes I talk to Daddy's picture and sometimes I kiss Daddy's picture. Daddy sends us pictures to put up on the wall. I even keep a picture of Daddy under my pillow. Jesse and Maria have pictures like mine. Their parents send them pictures too.

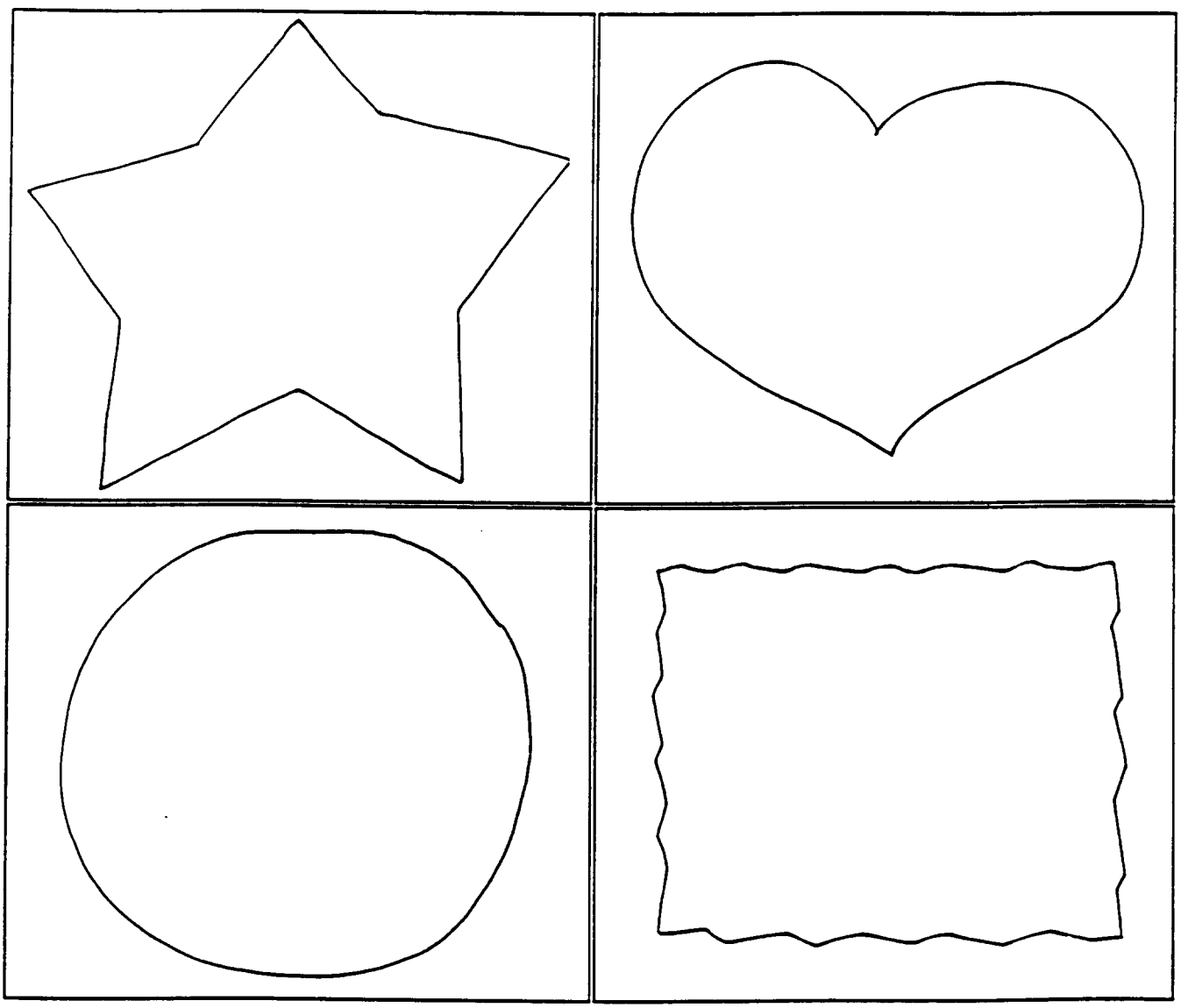
We Like These Pictures!

How many pictures do Sally and Ralphie have?

A Picture to Wear

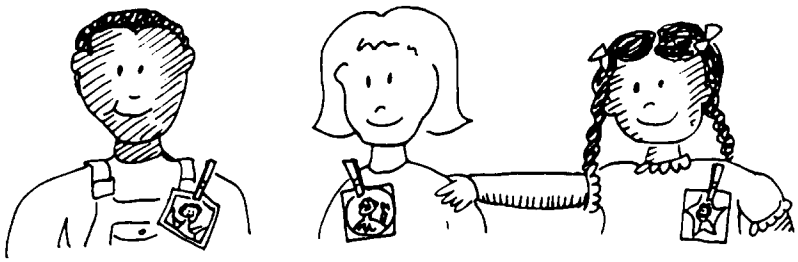
I have a picture of my daddy that I can wear. My mommy pasted the picture on cardboard and glued it to a clothespin. I wear it on my shirt. Jesse also wears his mommy's picture. So does Maria.

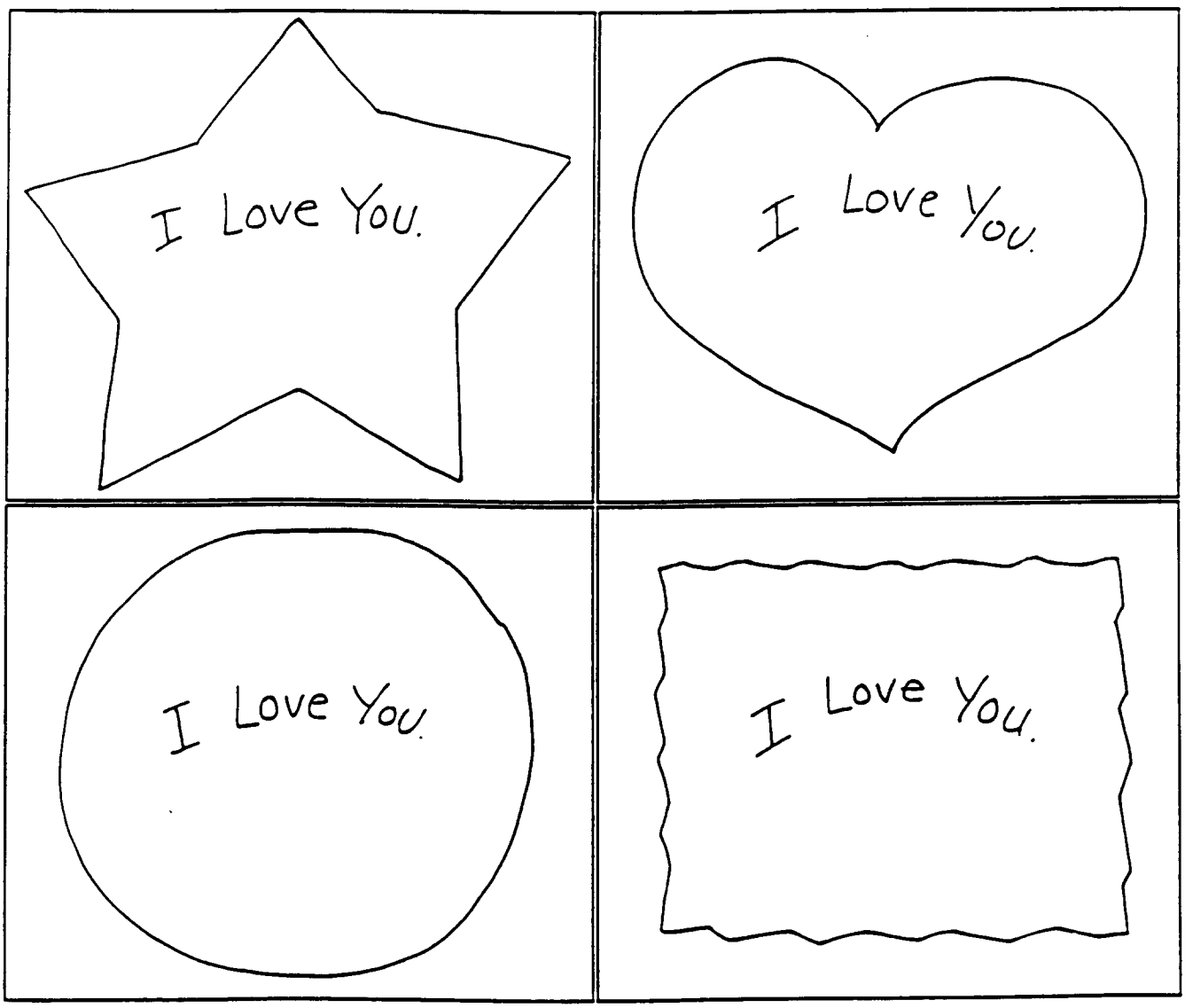
Your Mommy or Daddy Can Help You Make a Picture to Wear



Pick the Frame You Want For Your Picture. A Grown-up Can Help You Cut Out and Paste It On One of These Frames. Paste the Picture on a Clothespin So You Can Wear It.

Cut these out to paste on the back of the front frame.

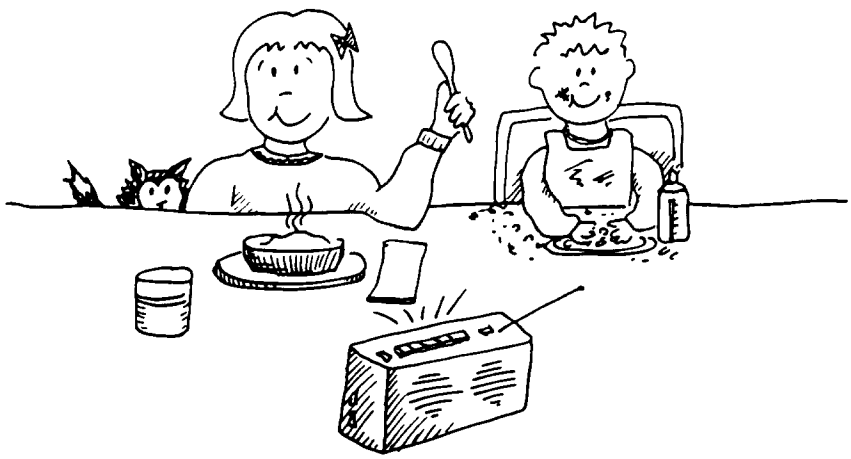




Listening to Our Parents While They Are Away

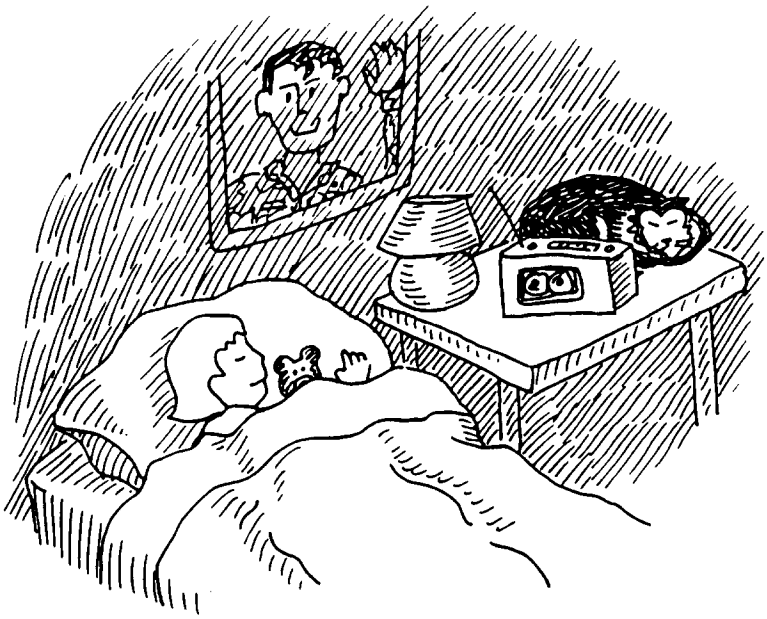
I like the story tapes and videos Daddy made for me before he left. I especially like the videotape of Daddy, Ralphie, and me playing together. Jesse and Maria have tapes that their parents made. Maria's mommy sang some songs for her on the tape. We like these tapes very much. These are some of the times that we listen to these tapes and watch the videos.

When I Am Eating Breakfast,

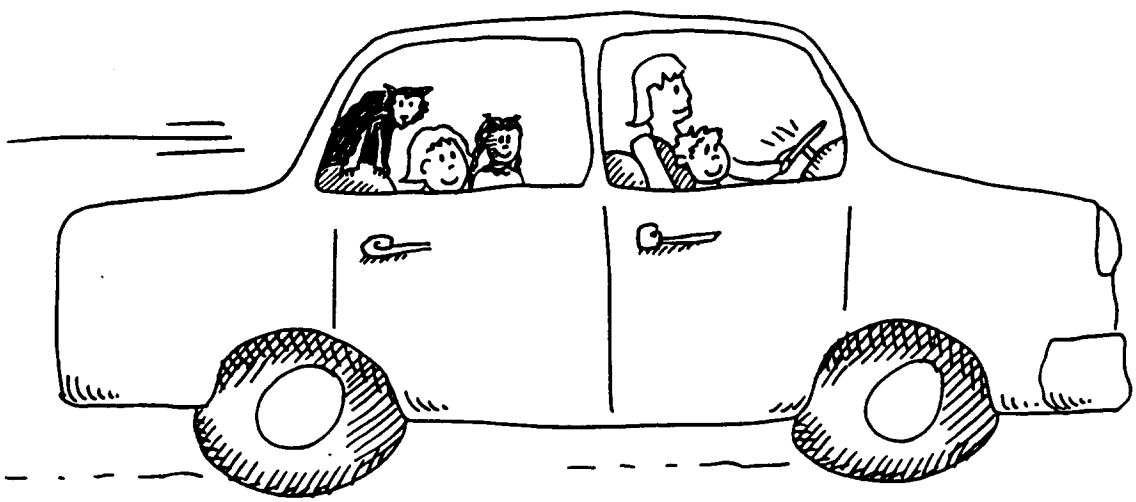


During the Day When We Play,

When I Go To Sleep At Night,



In the Car When We Go on Trips.



Can You Find Sam in these Pictures?

Things to Send Our Parents When They Are Away

Letters

Maria, Jesse, and I also send letters to our parents. We like to tell them that we love them. I tell Mommy what I want her to write in the letter. The letters go in the mail. Daddy likes to read these letters. They make him feel good.

Here is an Example of a Letter Your Parent Can Help You Write

Dear _____

Today we _____

_____

_____

We miss you because _____

_____

_____

When you come home we will _____

_____

_____

I Love You very, very, very much _____

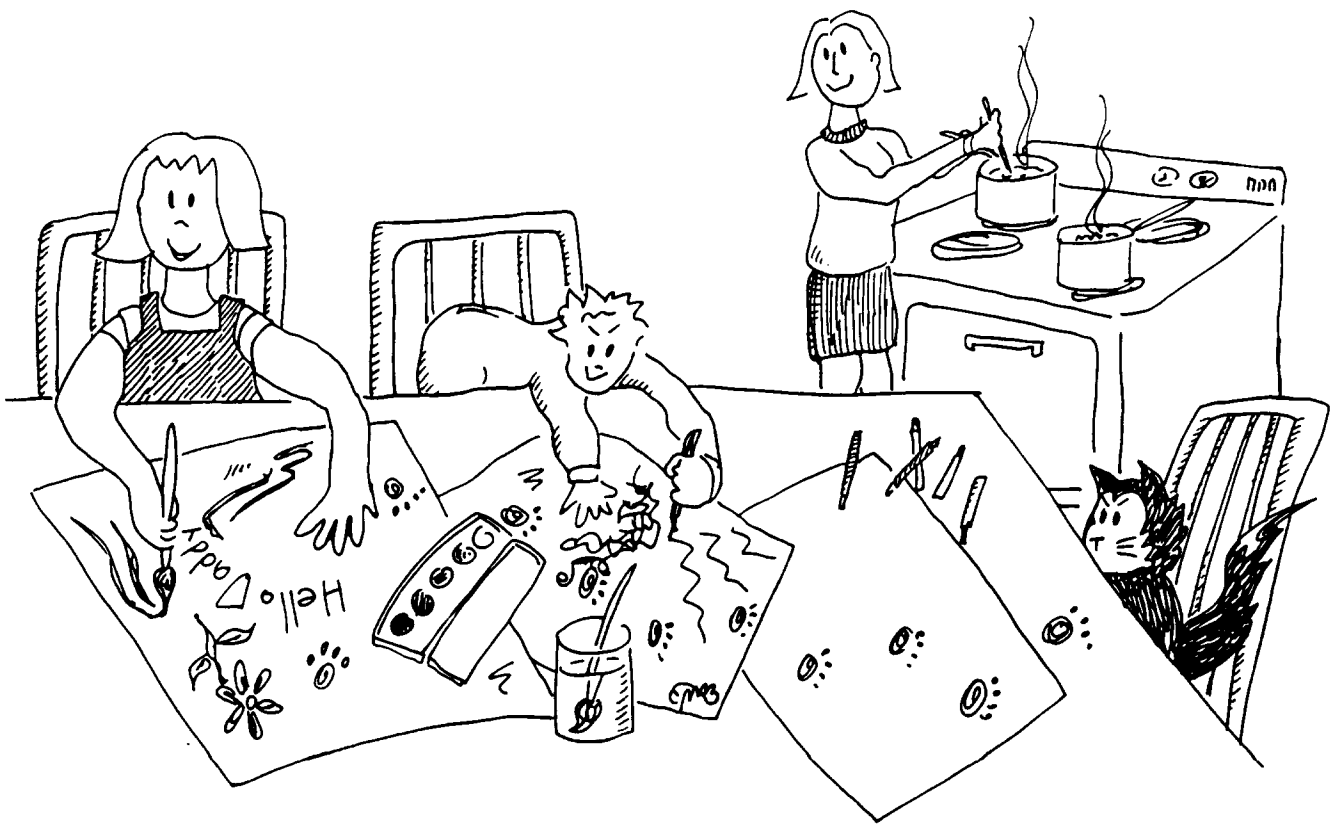
Prints to Send With Your Letter

Make a Print Here by Drawing Around Your Foot or Hand

MY PRINTS FOR YOU

Big Pictures

Sometimes we make big pictures for our parents. Mommy covers the table with big paper bags. Ralphie and I get to draw all over the paper. It's a lot of fun. We use crayons, big markers, stickers, and stamps. Sometimes we put Sam's paw print in the picture. Mommy writes a letter to Daddy on the back side of our pictures. Mommy sends the picture letter to Daddy. We tell Mommy to say that we love him and we miss him. He likes to get these letter pictures. Jesse and Maria make big pictures for their parents too.

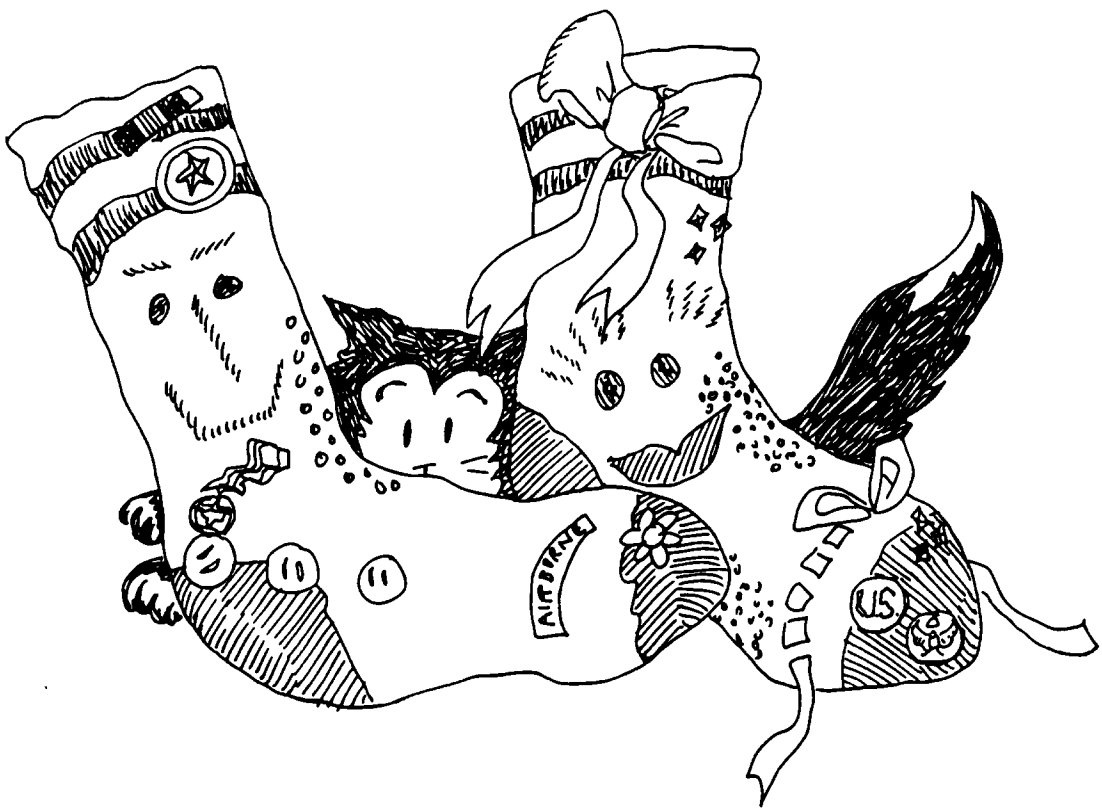


What Are Sally and Ralphie Doing?
What Is Sam Doing?

Silly Socks

When Jesse's mommy was away, he made her some silly socks. He and his grandma took a pair of his mommy's white socks and decorated them. They glued on buttons, bows, sparklie things, and a sticker which says U.S. ARMY and mailed the socks to her. She will think of him every time she wears them. They were really funny looking. I'm going to make some silly socks for my daddy.

You Can Make Your Mommy or Daddy Some Silly Socks

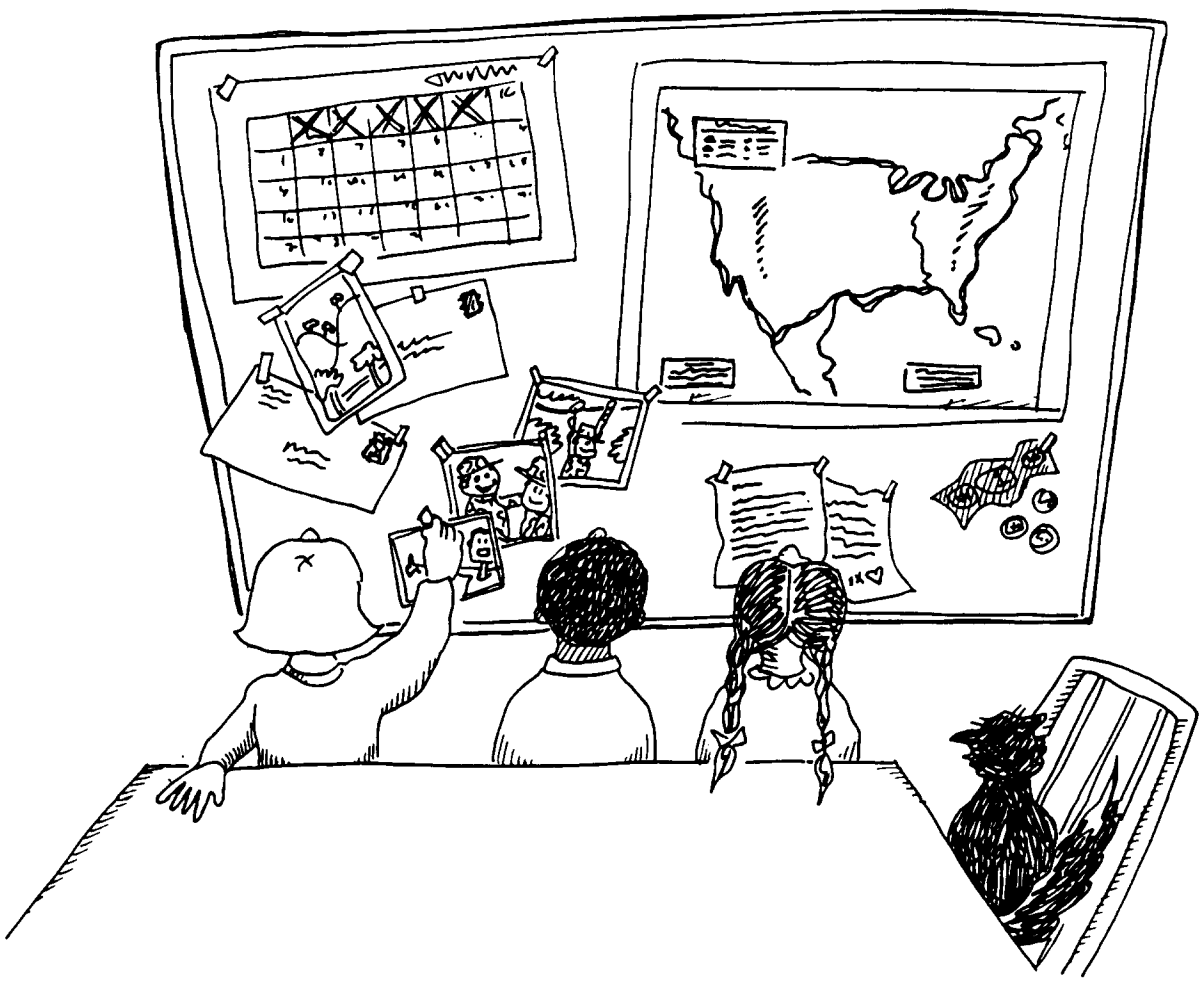


Where is Sam?

Our Family Poster

Jesse, Maria, and I all have special posters in our homes for when our parents are gone. Our parents send us postcards, letters, and stamps. They also send pictures that their friends take of them doing their job or having fun. We tape these things on our poster. Mommy put a map of the place where Daddy was working on the poster. She put an "x" on the spot where he is. We like this poster.

You Can Make a Separation Poster Too



No Matter Where Mommy or Daddy are in The World, We are a Family!

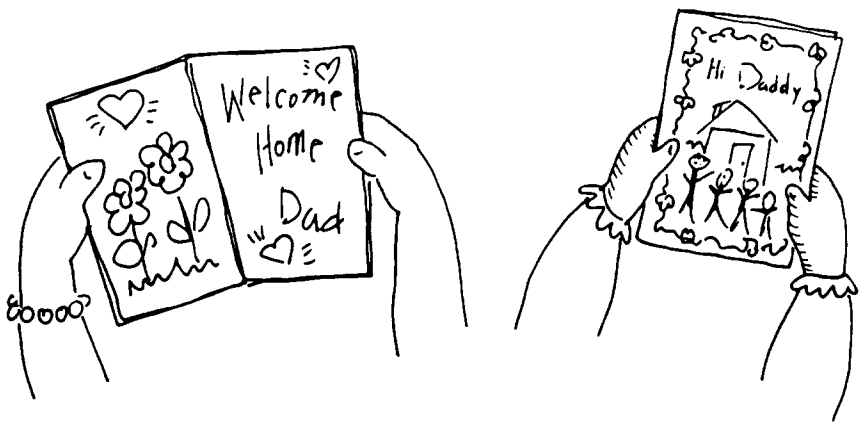
Homecoming

Getting Ready For Homecoming

The best time is when we get ready for our parents to come home. We were so sad when they left. We will be **SO** glad to see them when they come home. And they will be **SO** glad to see us, because they love us.

Once Maria and I made special cards to give our parents and they were beautiful. Our parents really liked these cards.

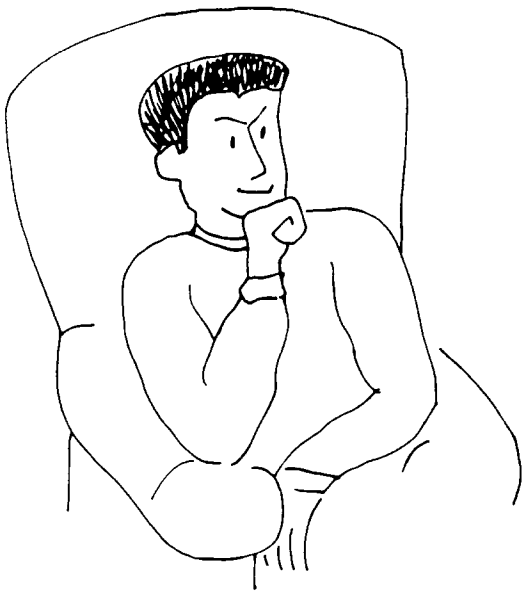
Special Cards to Make



Jesse and His Grandma Made a Banner That Said: "Welcome Home"

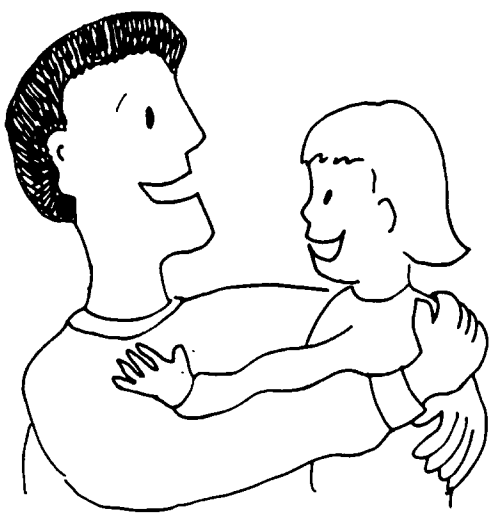
What Could You Do To Welcome Your Daddy or Mommy Home?

Special Times When Our Parents Come Home

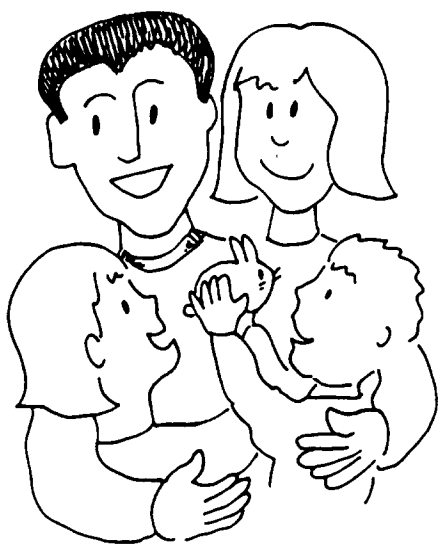


Sometimes Daddy needs
time alone when he comes home.

Sometimes Daddy needs to
spend time alone with Mommy.



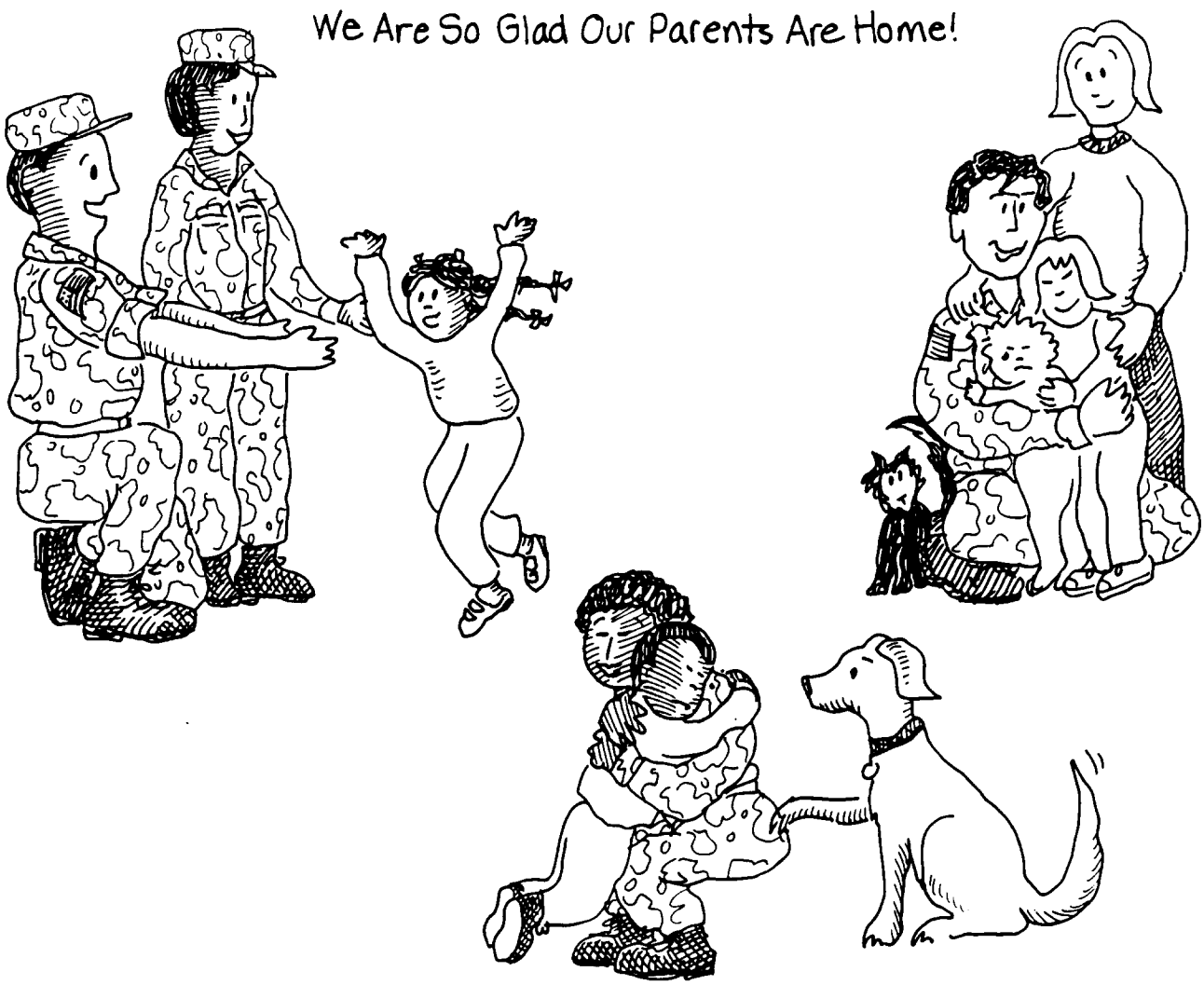
Sometimes Daddy spends
special time just with me.



Sometimes we spend time
all together as a family.

Our Parents Come Home

I am happy that my daddy is coming home but sometimes I worry that my daddy may not remember me and Ralphie and Sam. He has been away for a long time. Sometimes I'm not sure I want Daddy to come home. I still feel kinda mad that he left us. I also feel a little shy about seeing him. Mommy says it is OK to have different kinds of feelings about seeing Daddy. She says we can take our time becoming friends again. Last time Ralphie didn't even want to look at Daddy when he came home, but after a while, Ralphie got better.



Can You Find Sally, Ralphie, Jesse, Maria, and Sam? How Do They Feel Now? It is Good to be Together Again! Our Families are Really Special!

We're glad you're home—
WE LOVE YOU!