Goodbyes are Hard

A Booklet about Military Separations for Six Through Eight Year Old Children

A Message to Parents,

This booklet is written to help you help your young children understand and cope with military separations.

Guide your child through it.

* Read it with your child.
* Choose activities to do together.
* Use it as a starting point for separation discussions and activities.

We hope this booklet will help you make your military separations successful.

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A Booklet About Military Separations for Six Through Eight Year Olds

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GOODBYES ARE HARD 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.

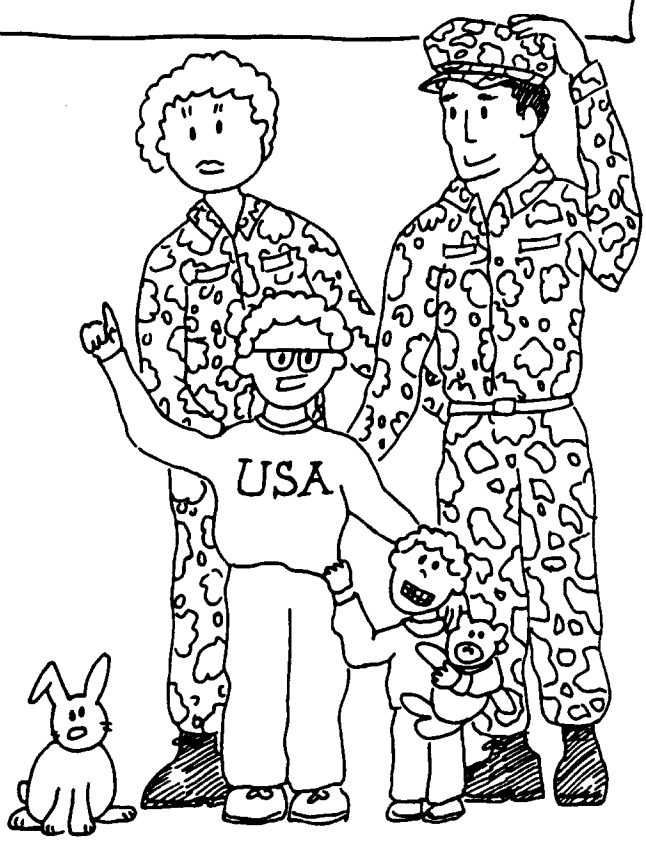
All four booklets were developed with the help of active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve families and Family Support personnel. We sincerely thank all those who helped us produce these publications.

February 1993

HI KIDS!!

My name is Tommy. I'm almost 8. I have a little brother, Danny, and a bunny named Bucky. My mother is in the Army Reserves and my father is in the Army. My mother and father have to go away a lot to do their jobs. I am proud of them because their jobs are important.

I wrote this book to tell you about some of the neat things we do in our family when my parents have to go away to work. There are some puzzles and things to make in this book, too. I hope you like them.



FEELINGS

When one of my parents goes away I have all kinds of feelings. I have sad feelings, confused feelings, even some happy feelings. Everyone has feelings about separations, even grownups.

When we know we will be separated, my parents and I talk about our feelings. This feels good.

Here are some of the feelings kids have when one of their parents is going to go away.

☆ Happy

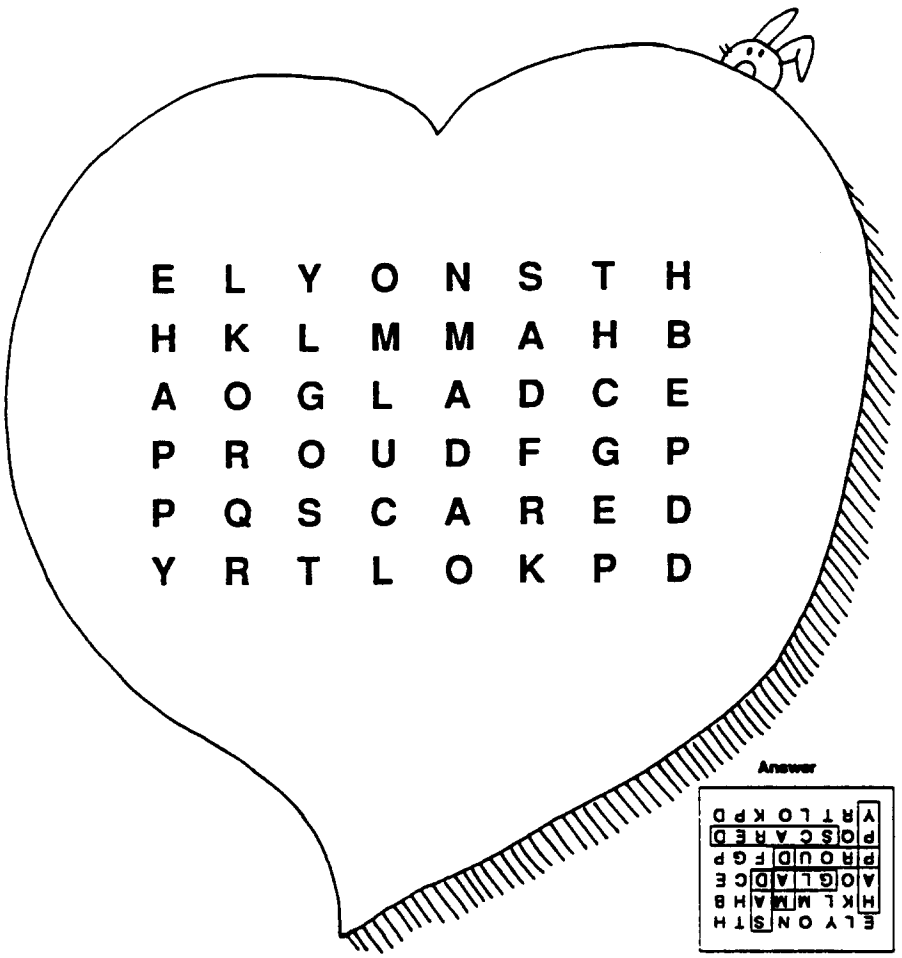
☆ Glad

☆ Scared

☆ Proud

☆ Mad

☆ Sad



E	L	Y	O	N	S	T	H
H	K	L	M	M	A	H	B
A	O	G	L	A	D	C	E
P	R	O	U	D	F	G	P
P	Q	S	C	A	R	E	D
Y	R	T	L	O	K	P	D

Answer

Look down, and across to find and circle these feeling words.

Color in those circled feelings <u>you</u> have and then talk about them with your parents or someone else you trust.

GETTING THE FACTS

Before separations, I ask a lot of "W" questions.

Sometimes my parents don't know all the answers to these questions, but I feel lots better knowing as much as I can.

On the next page is a trip sheet you can fill in when your parent goes away. There are maps on the back to mark where your Mom or Dad is going.

WHEN will my parent leave?

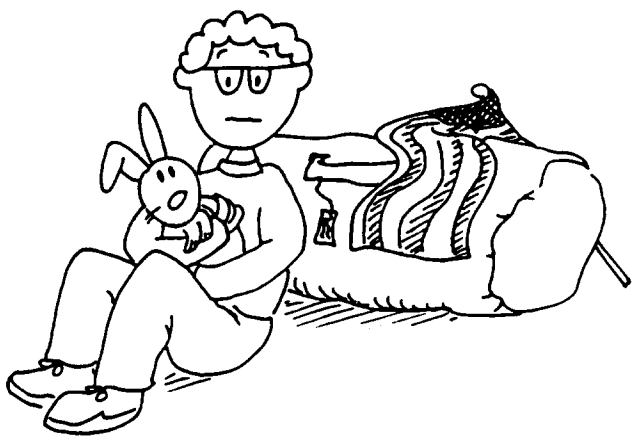
WHERE is my parent going and what will it be like there?

WHAT will my parent do there?

WHY is my parent going away?

WHO else will be going?

WILL my parent be safe?



TRIP SHEET

Who is going? _____

When and for how long? _____

Where? (Show this on the map on the back of this page)

_____

Why? _____

_____

_____

Who else is going? _____

_____

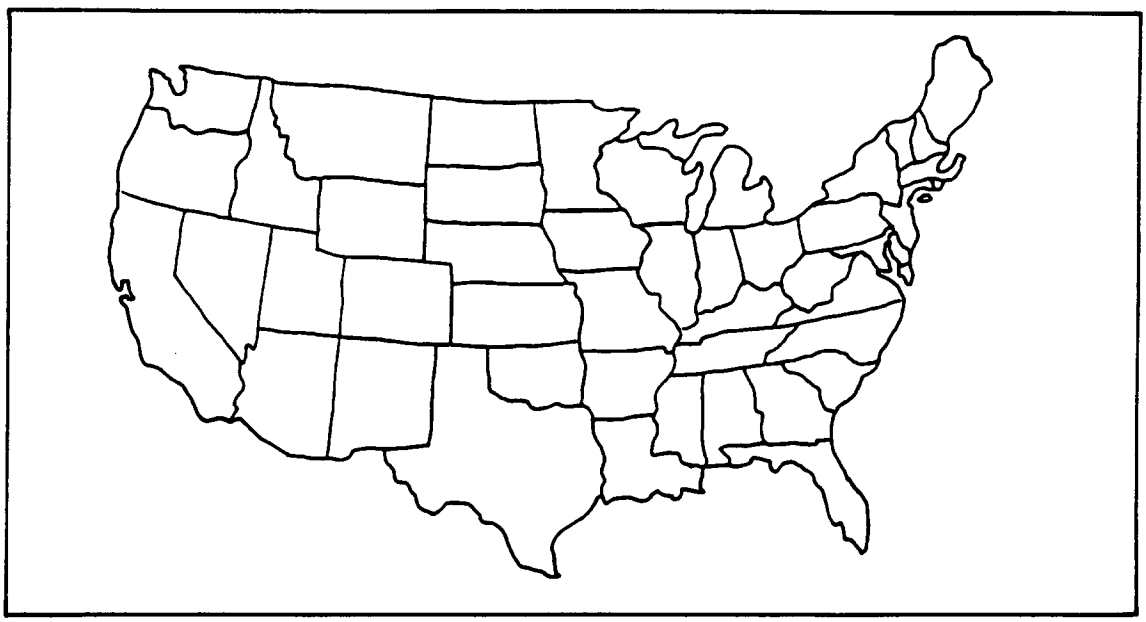
_____

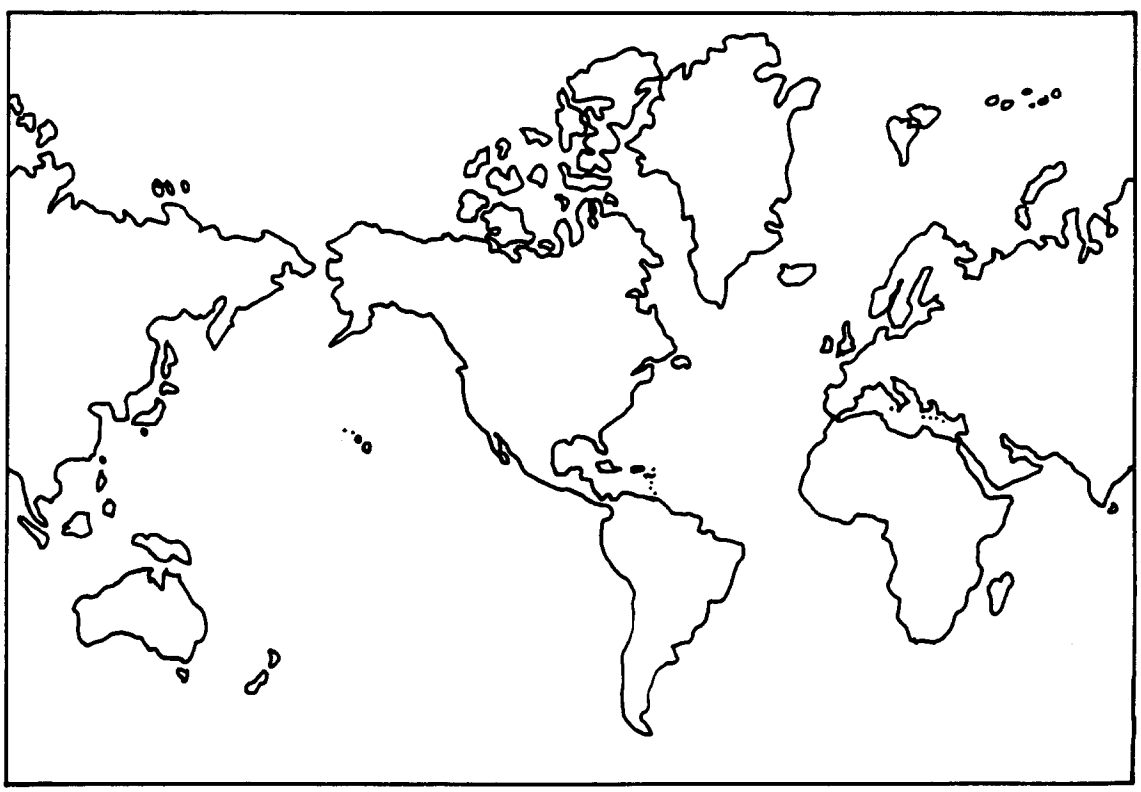
Other stuff about the trip _____

_____

_____

WHERE?





PLANNING

Before Mom or Dad goes away we have a trip planning talk. I like these talks. Here are some of the things I asked about once before Mom left.

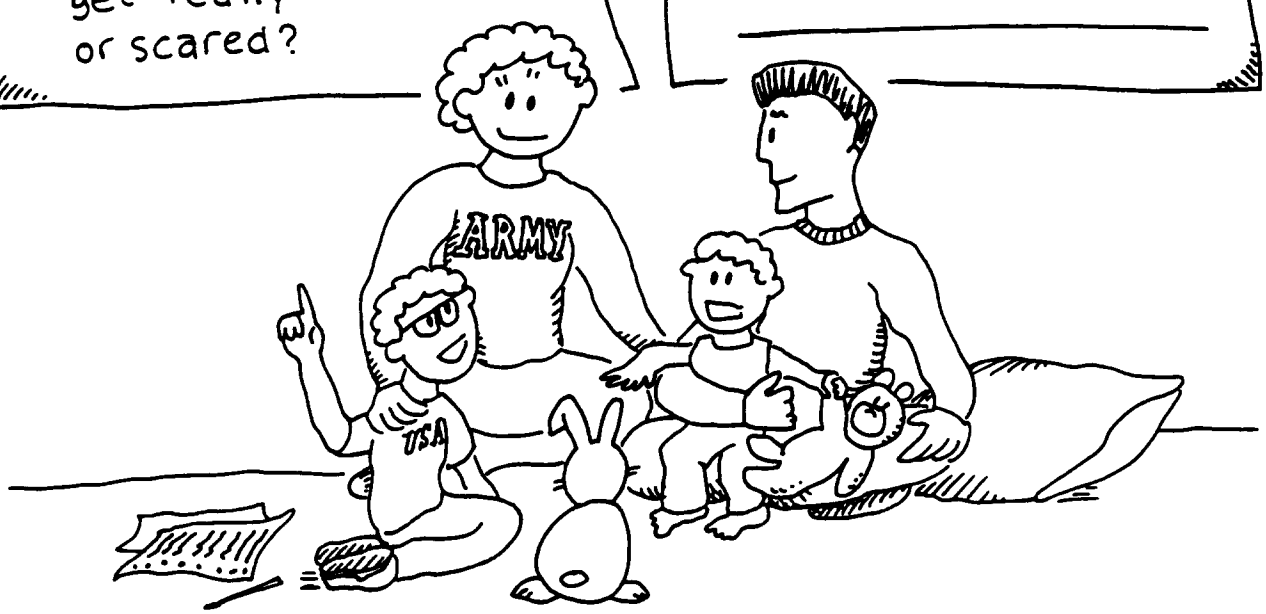
What are the things that you would like to talk to your parents about before their trips?

Tommy's Questions

- Will we all go to see Mom leave?
- Will Mom write to me a lot?
- Who will take care of me if Dad has to go away too?
- Will I have more jobs to do at home?
- What will I do if I get really lonesome or scared?

Your Questions

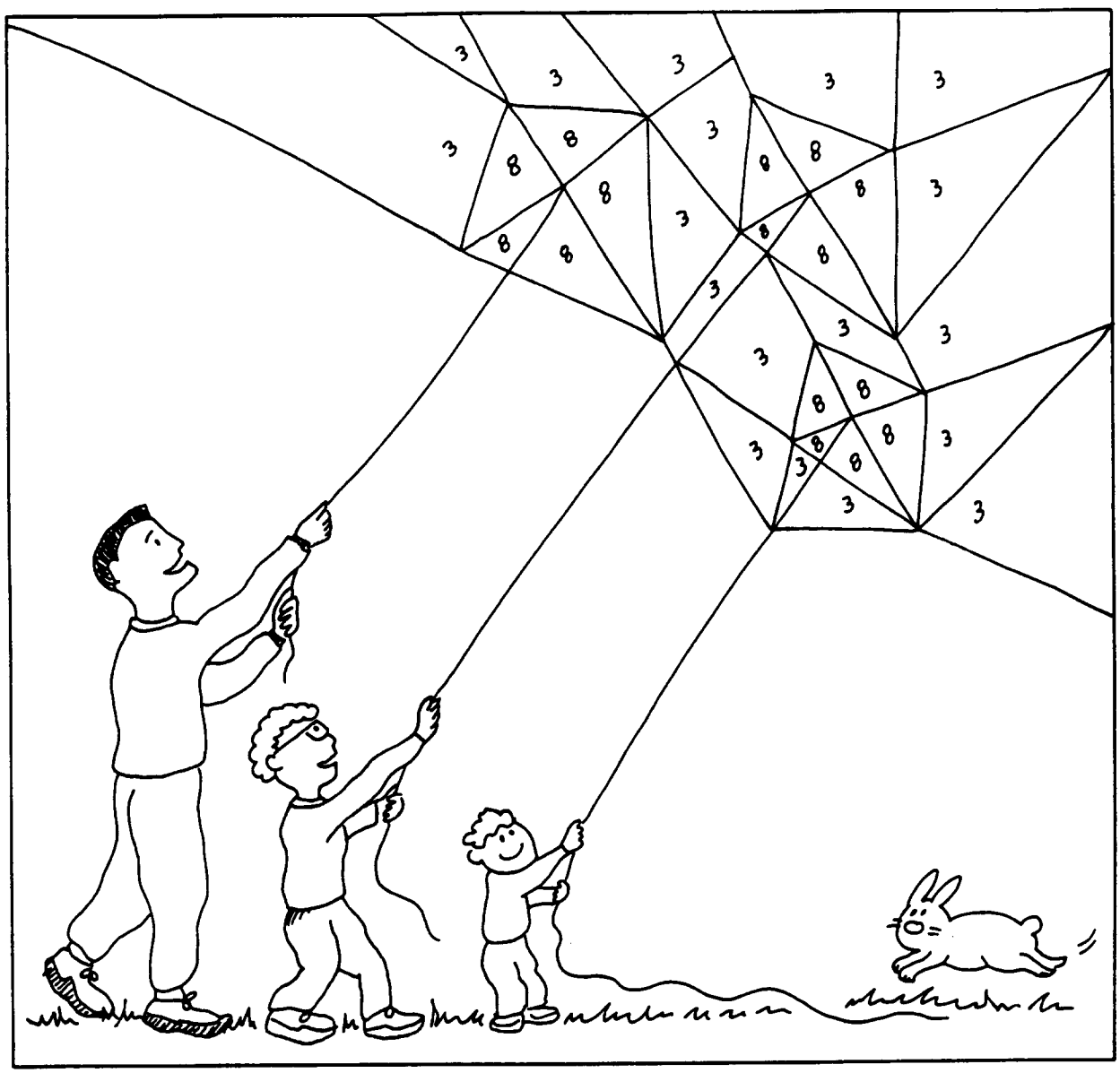
* _____
_____
* _____
_____
* _____
_____
* _____
_____



FAMILY TIME

Just before going away, my parent who is leaving spends time alone with me and with Danny. These are good times. We also do something special as a family, like go to the zoo or have a party.

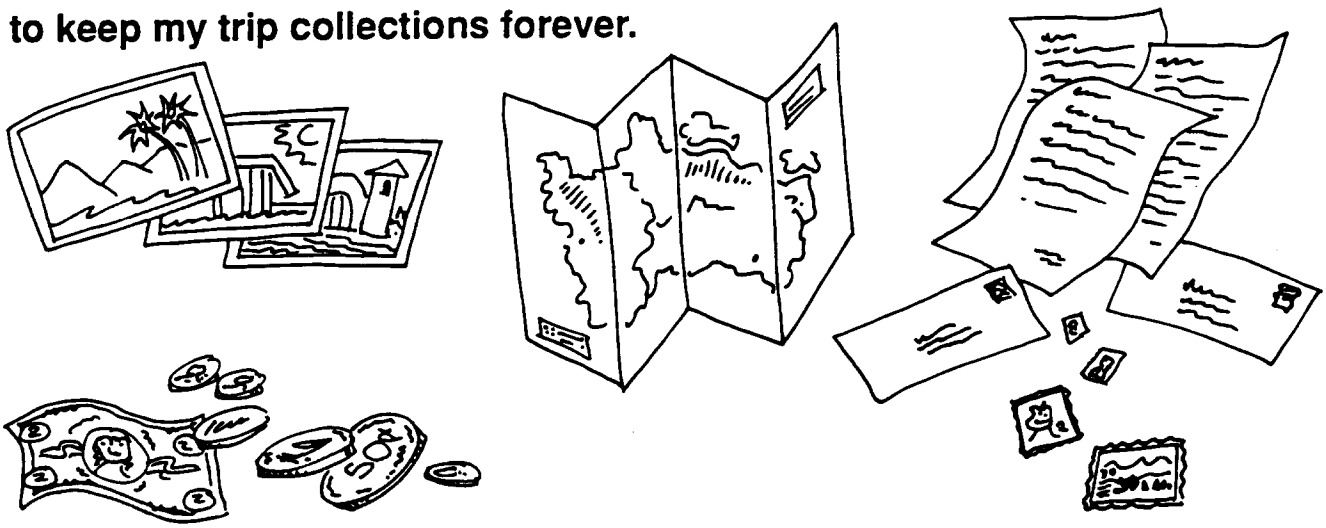
To find out what we did just before Dad went away once, color in the shapes that have a number 8 inside them.



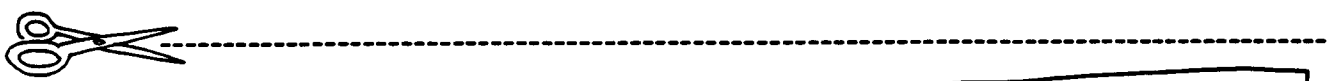
TRIP COLLECTIONS

When one of my parents goes away I make a collection of trip things. I put them on my wall, or in a box, or in a scrapbook.

Dad and Mom like sending me things for my trip collections. I'm going to keep my trip collections forever.



Here is a label that you can cut out and color for a trip collection.

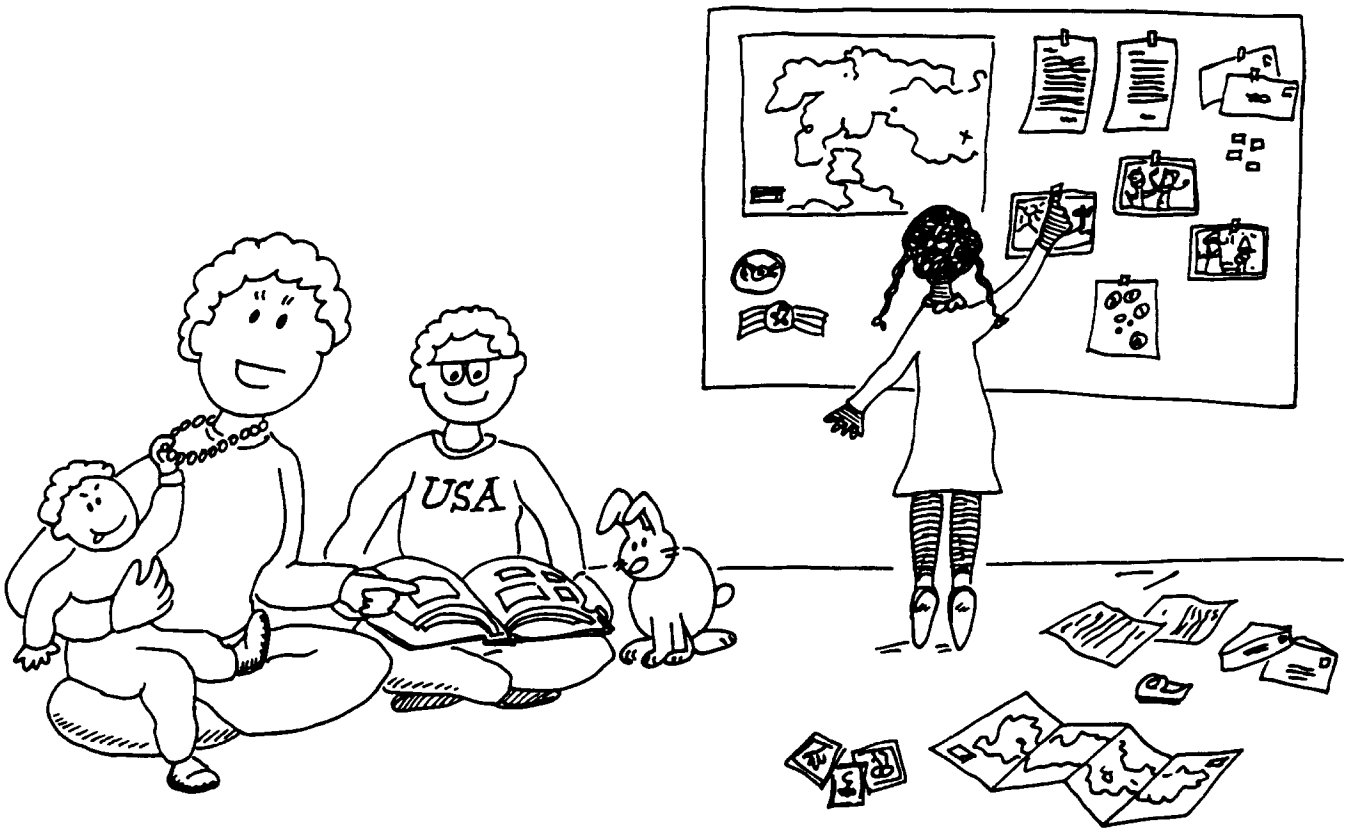


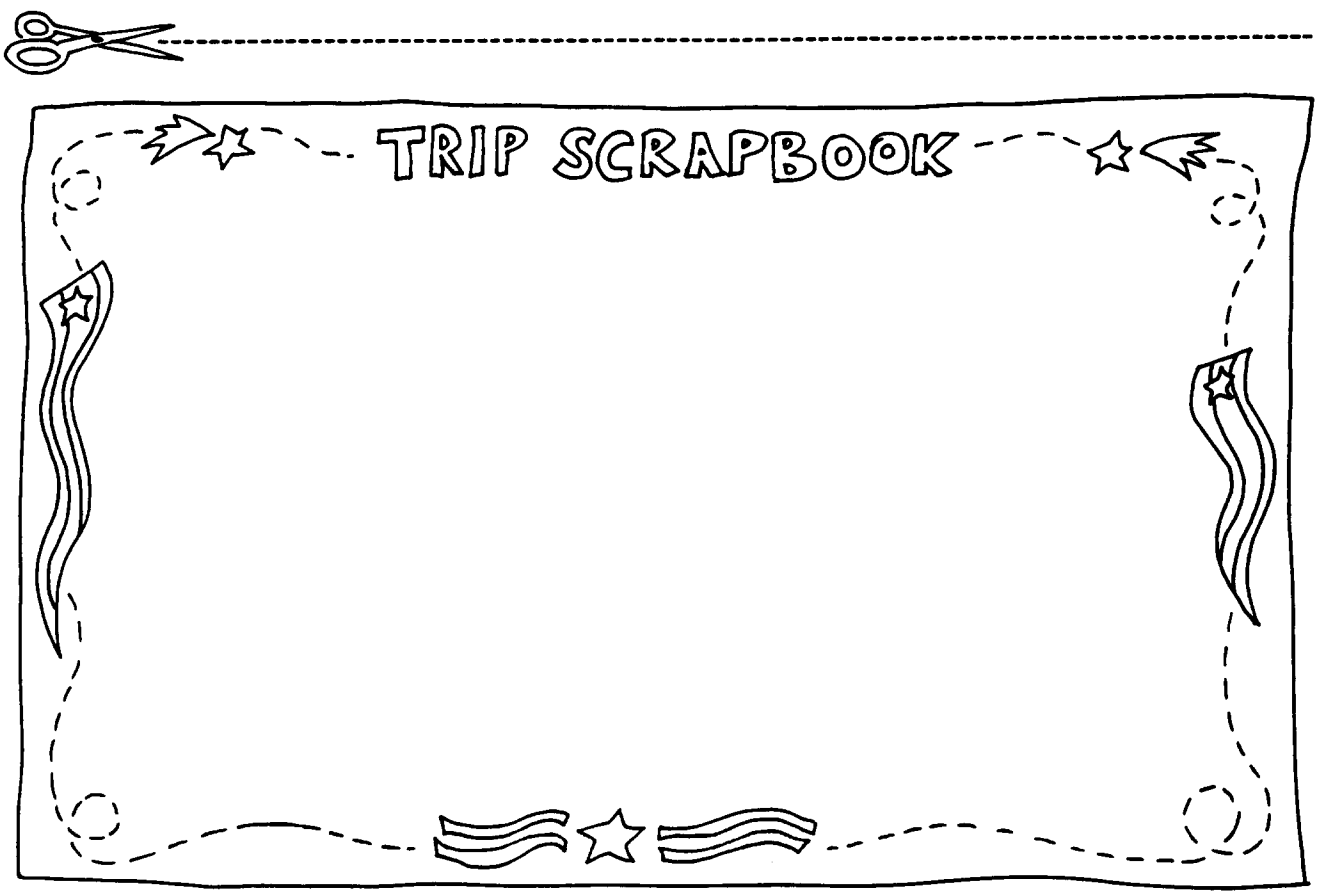
TRIP COLLECTION

Traveler:

Trip dates:

Destination:


USA

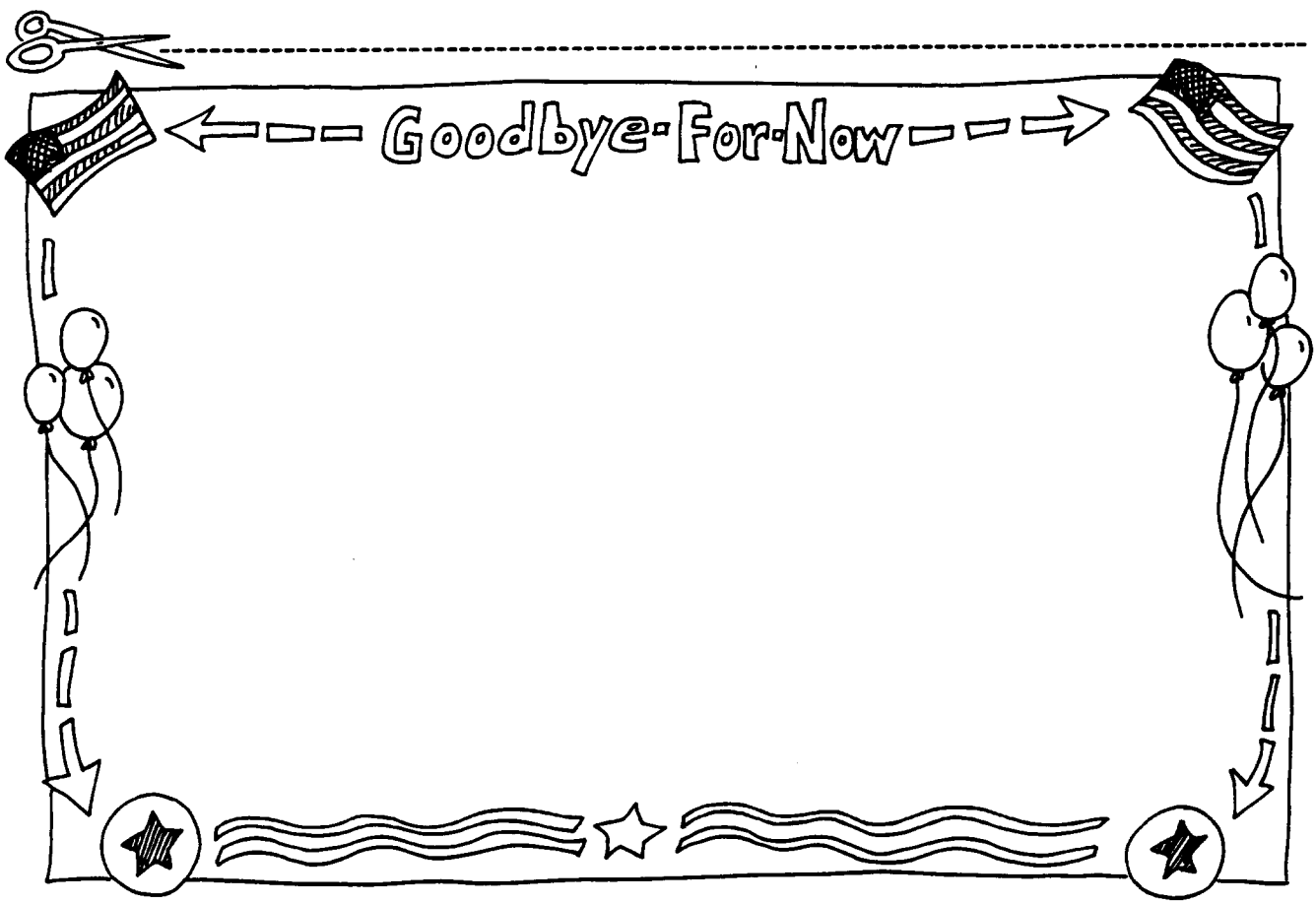

TRIP SCRAPBOOK

GOODBYE SURPRISES

Before Mom or Dad leaves, if we have time, we make goodbye surprises for each other. Once Mom made us a tape of stories to listen to while she was away. She even sang a song for us on the tape. Once Dad left me a little book of photographs of our family. I liked looking at that book while he was gone. Another time, he left a bunch of fun cards for me to open one every week while he was gone. That was great!

I like to draw my parents surprise Goodbye-For-Now pictures. Sometimes I write letters to them on the back. My Mom and Dad have saved all my Goodbye-For-Now pictures and letters, even the really silly ones I did when I was little.

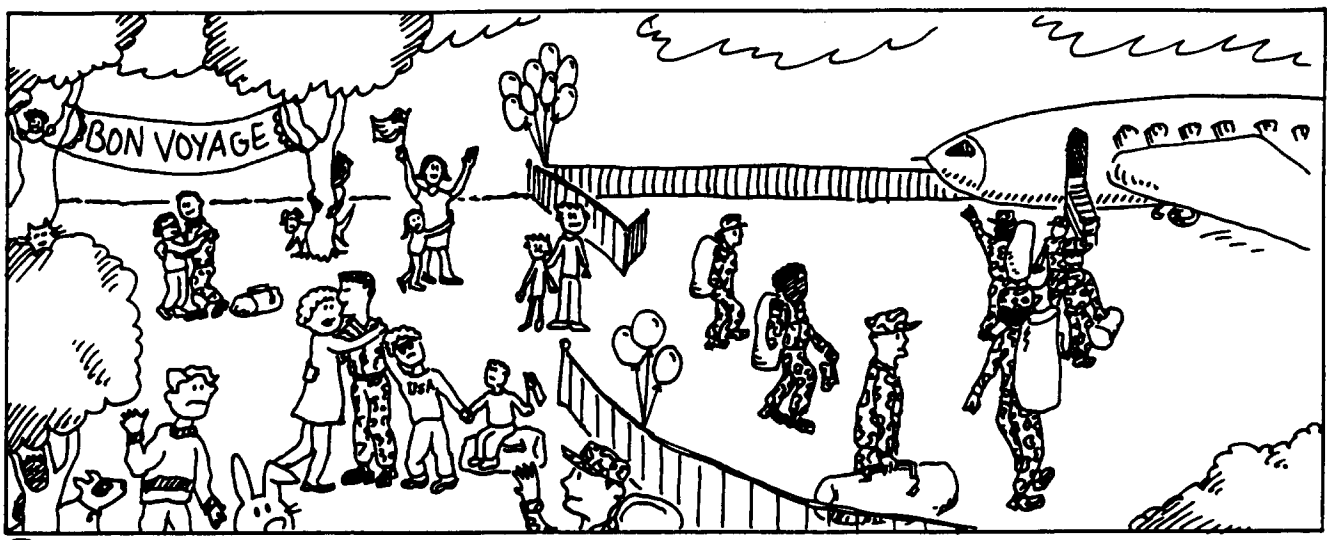
You can make a Goodbye-For-Now picture here for your parent who is leaving. You can use the back for a goodbye note.



WE SAY GOODBYE

We all go together to say goodbye. We are excited and sad at the same time. Sometimes we cry a little and sometimes we cry a lot. Sometimes we cry on the way back home.

This is a picture of families saying goodbye. Can you find our family? Can you find Bucky Bunny and me?



I'll Miss You

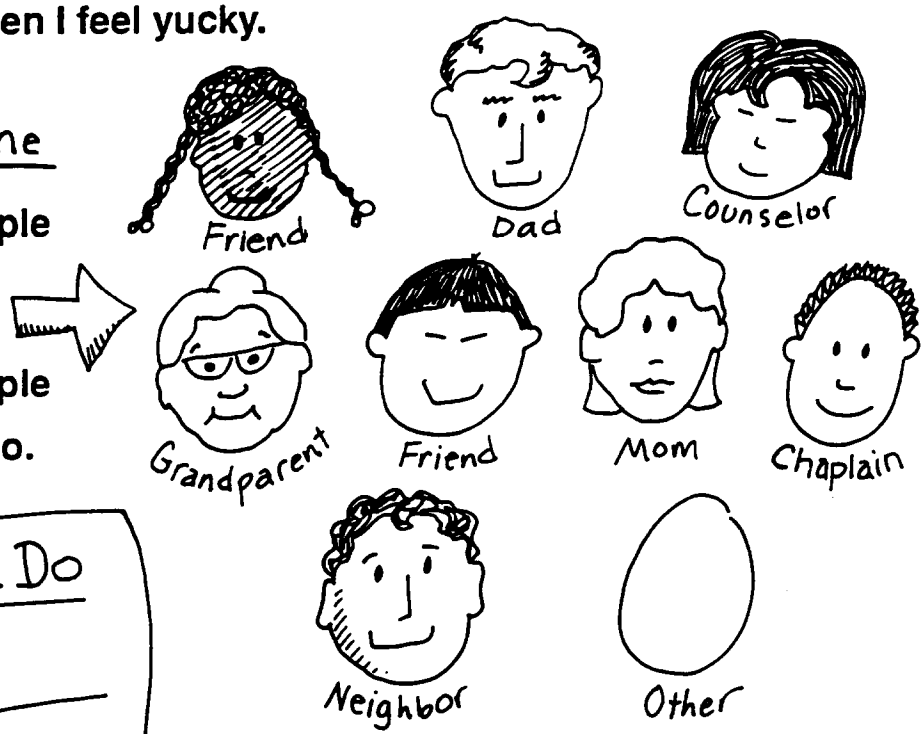
WHAT I DO WHEN I FEEL YUCKY

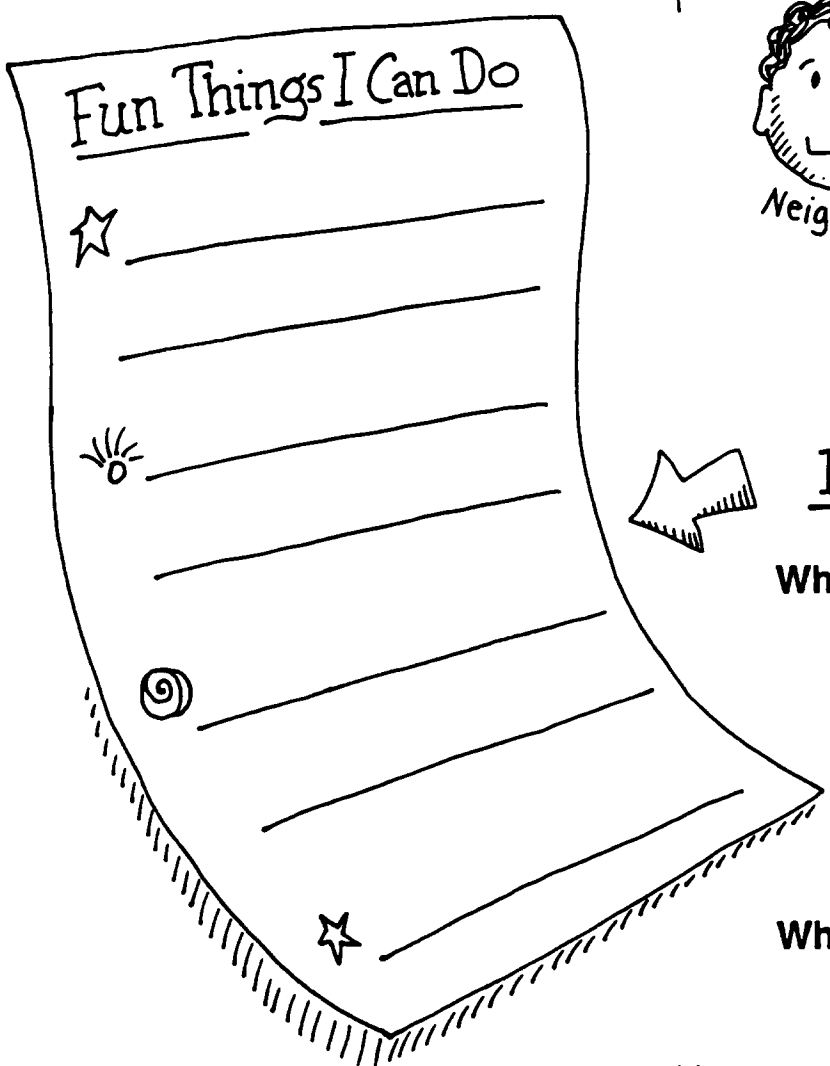
Sometimes when my parents are gone, I feel yucky. I get scared that they will get hurt or I feel mad because they have to go away. Here are some things that help me when I feel yucky.

I Talk to Someone

Here are some people I talk to.

Color in those people you can talk to.





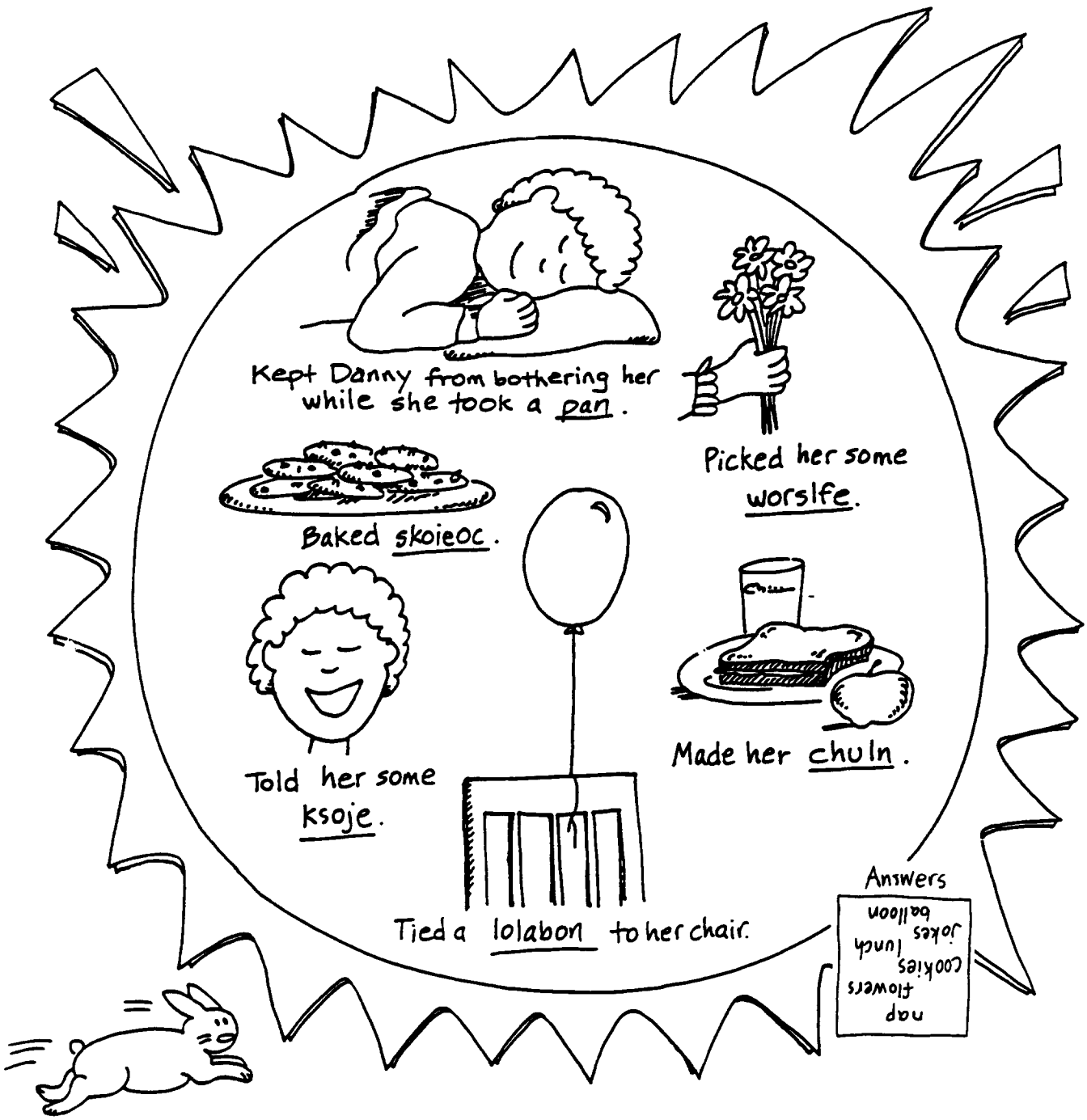
I Do Something Fun

When I feel bad I make myself do something fun like play with Bucky or draw a picture. That always seems to help.

What are fun things you can do when you feel yucky?

I CHEER UP MY AT-HOME PARENT

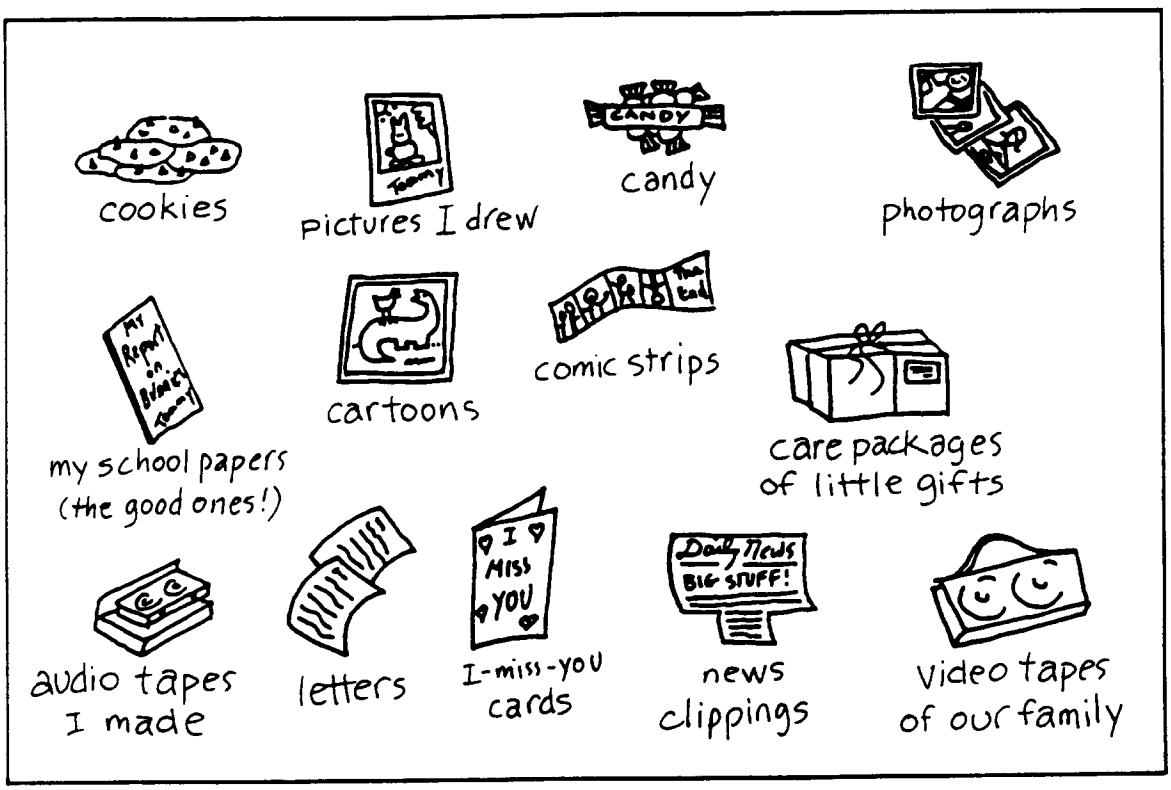
I feel better when I try to cheer up my at-home parent. Here are some of the things that I did to cheer up mom up last time dad went away. You can find out what they were by the pictures and by unscrambling the letters.

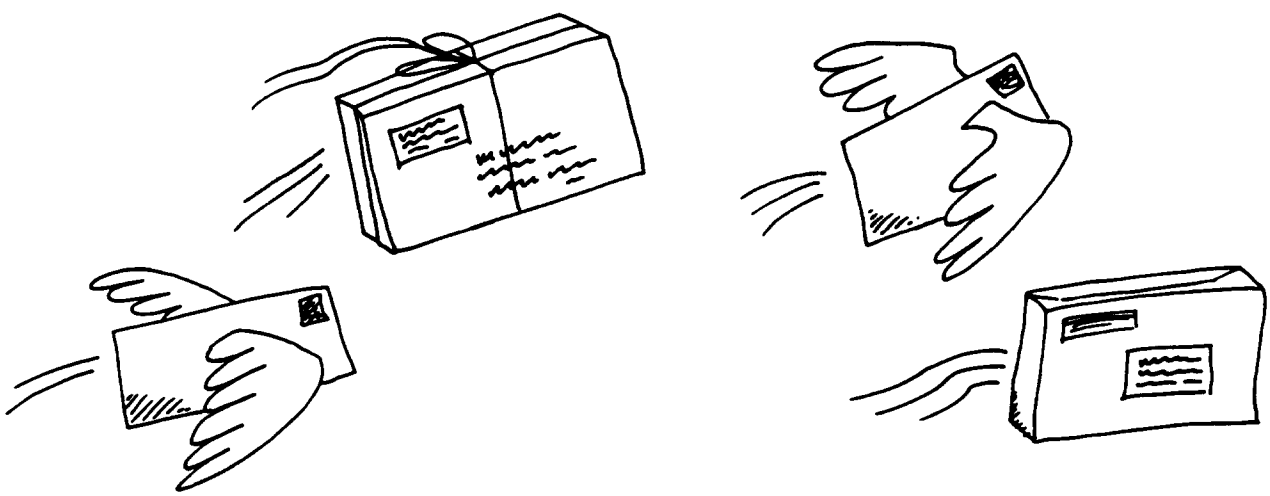


THINGS WE SEND

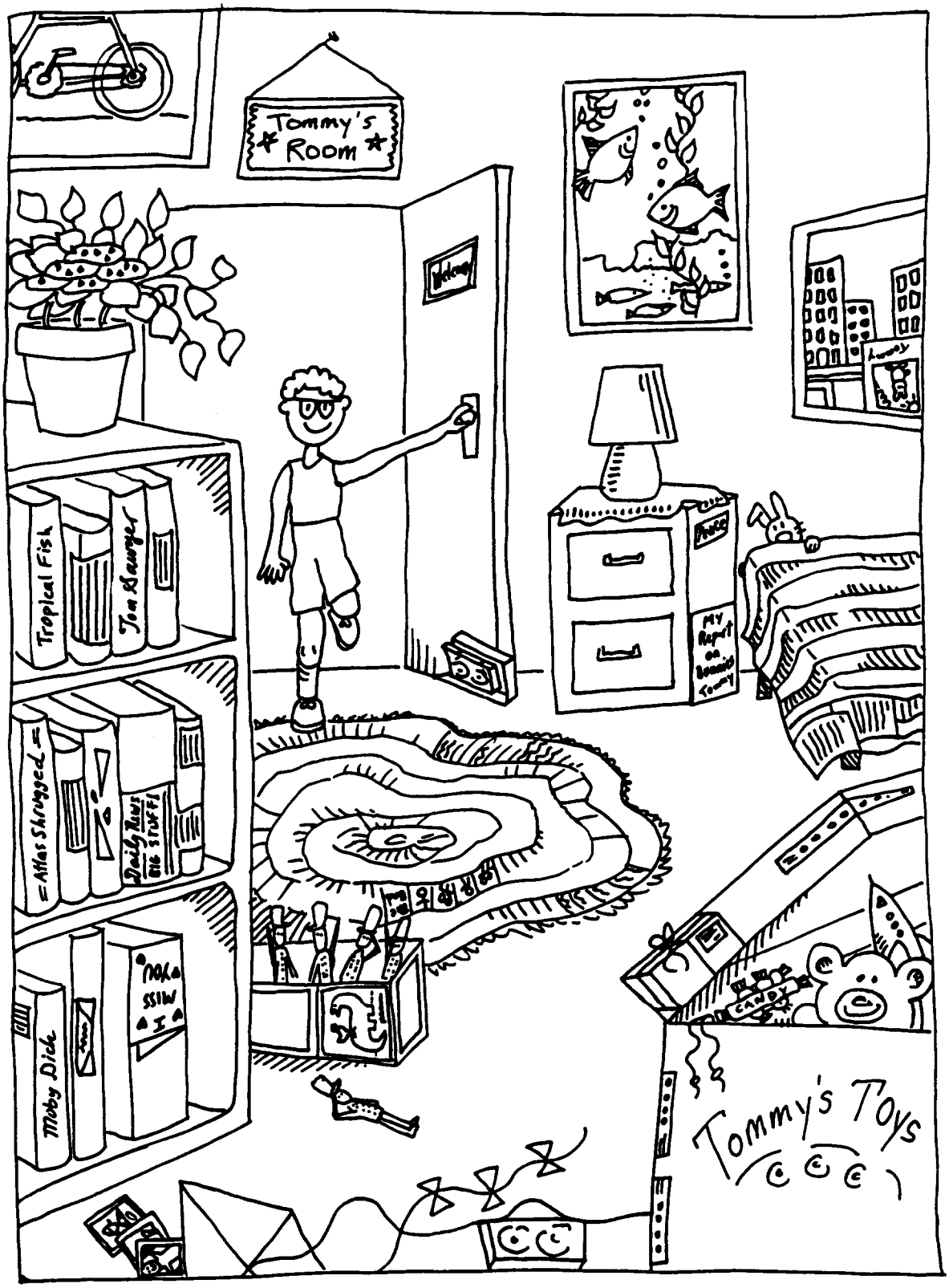
We like to send things to each other when we are apart. Here are some things I have sent my parents when they were away.

Can you find these things hidden in the picture on the next page?



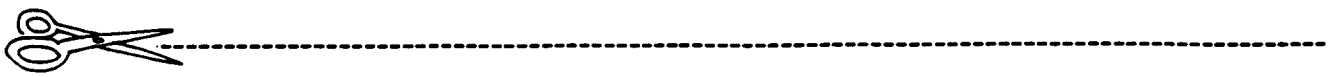


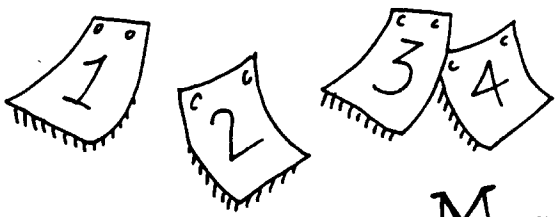
THINGS WE SEND



A QUICK LETTER

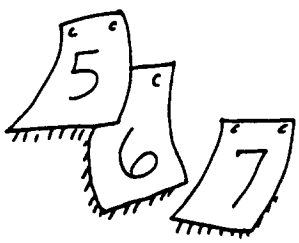
Here is a quick letter you can send to your parent. On the back you can paste pictures from a magazine to tell about your week.





Date _____

My Week



Dear _____,

This is what happened to me this week:

♡ **I did this new thing:** _____

I had this great meal: _____

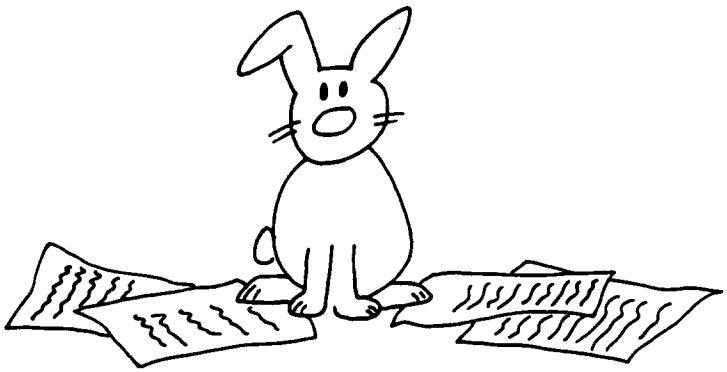
☆ **This funny thing happened:** _____

_____

I miss you.

I Love You,

_____



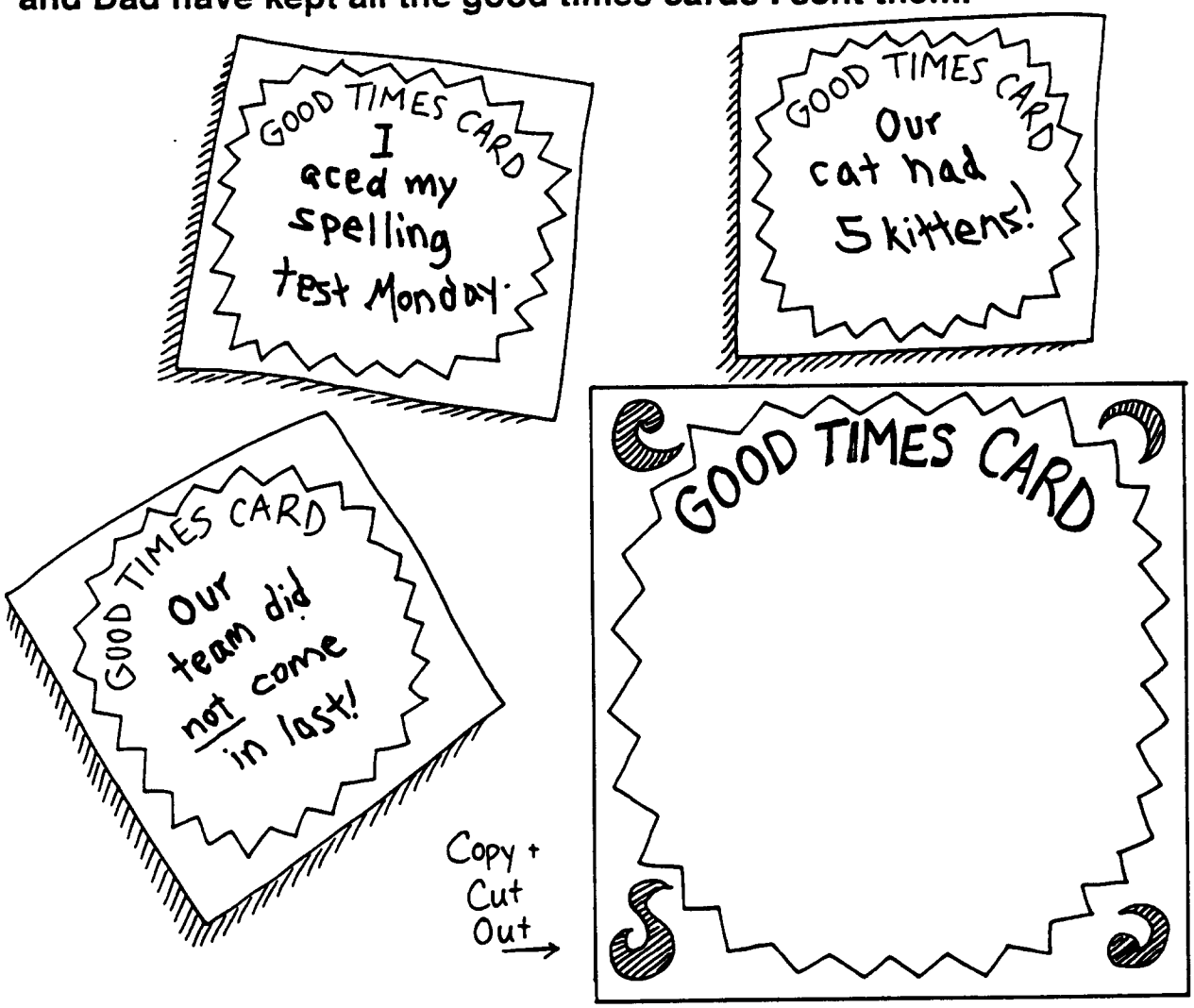
My Week

GOOD TIMES CARDS

When we are apart, my parents and I trade good times cards. Here are the good times cards that my dad and I sent each other once when he was away. The three cards on this page are the ones that I sent him. The three cards on the next page are ones he sent to me.

You can make your own good times cards. Make up your own or use the pattern on the bottom of this page. Keep 10 or 12 cards for yourself and send your parent 10 or 12 cards. Then both of you fill them out and send them to each other about once a week

I put the good times cards my dad sent me in my trip scrapbook. Mom and Dad have kept all the good times cards I sent them.



These are my cards from Dady

GOOD TIMES CARD
I got the cookies you sent me— none were broken!

GOOD TIMES CARD
It stopped raining for a day!

GOOD TIMES CARD!

GOOD TIMES CARD
I got the weekend off!

WHEN PARENTS COME HOME

Homecomings are fun and exciting. It's good to see our parents again. But homecomings can be hard, too.

Here are some worries I have had when Mom and Dad are coming home.

- Will they like being at home?
- Could they have changed too much?
- Will they still want to do fun things with me?
- What if they get mad because I wasn't good all the time?
- Can we still get along together?
- Will they like the way I've changed?
- Will they make tougher family rules?

Lots of kids have these worries. Mom and Dad worry about coming home, too. When we get together we talk about our worries and that helps us work things out.

SOME THINGS KIDS CAN DO TO MAKE HOMECOMINGS BETTER

Help get ready for the homecoming.

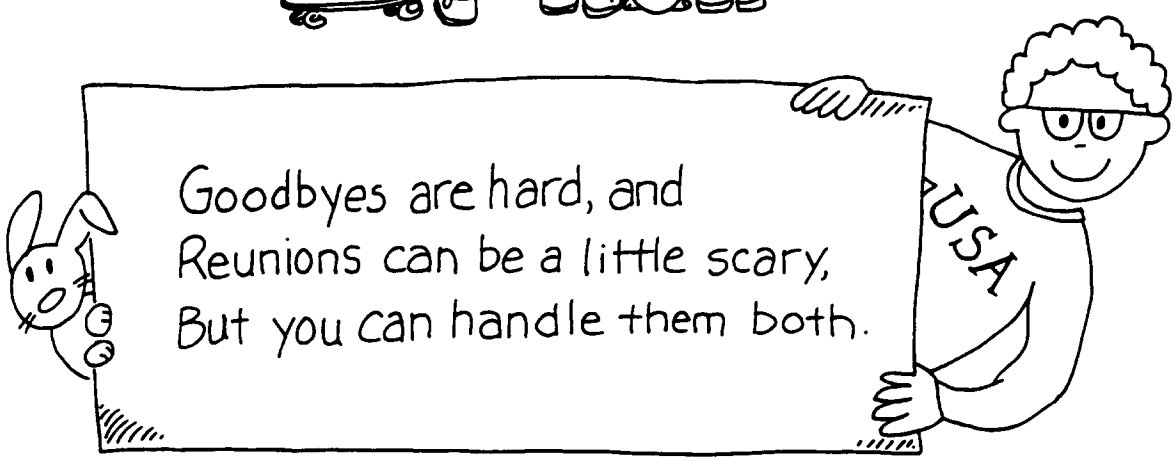
Take it slow. You have all changed. It takes time to get used to being together again.

Give your parents time to be together.

Give your returning parents time to be alone.

Show your returning parents you love them and are proud of them.

Don't worry if your returning parents are sometimes tired or grumpy.



Welcome Home!
I MADE IT!
USA
We're proud of you!
me too!

OPERATION

READY

Resources for Educating About Deployment and You